

Ἀπολυτίκιον

Ἦχος α΄. Τῆς ἐρήμου πολίτης.

Θεολόγον θεόπνουν, τὸν δρεπάνῃ τοῦ Πνεύματος
ἄρτι ἀθεΐας τὴν πλάνην καὶ Λατίνων τὸ φρύαγμα
συγκόψαντα, τιμήσωμεν λαμπρῶς,
τὸν Σέρβον Ἰουστίνον τὸν σοφόν,
ὡς τοῦ Θεανθρώπου μύστην
καὶ φίλον εὐσεβείας ἀνακράζοντες·
Δόξα τῷ σὲ δοξάσαντι Χριστῷ,
δόξα τῷ σὲ στεφανώσαντι,
δόξα τῷ σὲ κειμένων ἐν σκιᾷ
φωστήρα δείξαντι.

Κοντάκιον

Ἦχος α΄. Τὸν τάφον σου, Σωτήρ.

Ἀκένωντον πηγὴν
Ὁρθοδόξων δογμάτων
καὶ ἄγγελον σαρκὶ
ζῆλον πνέοντα θεῖον
πιστοῖς καταγγέλομεν
Ἰουστίνον τὸν ἔνθεον,
Σέρβων βλάστημα,
αὐτοῦ τοῖς λόγοις ἀρτίως
καὶ συγγράμμασιν
ἐπιστηρίζαντα πάντα
λαὸν ἐπὶ Κύριον.

Μεγαλυνάριον

Χαίροις, Ἰουστίνε θεοειδές,
πάντων Ὁρθοδόξων
Ἐωσφόρε ἀρτιφανές,
ὕψηλίου πλάτη
ἀκτῖσιν ὁ φωτίσας
τῶν θείων σου ῥημάτων
καὶ σῆς ἐνστάσεως.

Apolytikion mode 1

Let us honor with splendor the divinely inspired theologian, the wise Serb Justin, who by the scythe of the Holy Spirit hath thrashed the error of atheism and the insolence of the Latins, being a mystic of the God-man and lover of piety, crying out: Glory to Christ Who hath glorified thee, glory to Him Who hath crowned thee, glory to Him Who hath rendered thee a luminary to those who are in a state of darkness.

Kontakion mode 1

We proclaim to the faithful the inexhaustible fount conveying the Orthodox doctrines, and an angel-like man full of divine zeal, the divine Justin, the offspring of the Serbs, who by his sound teachings and writings hath strengthened the faith of all in the Lord.

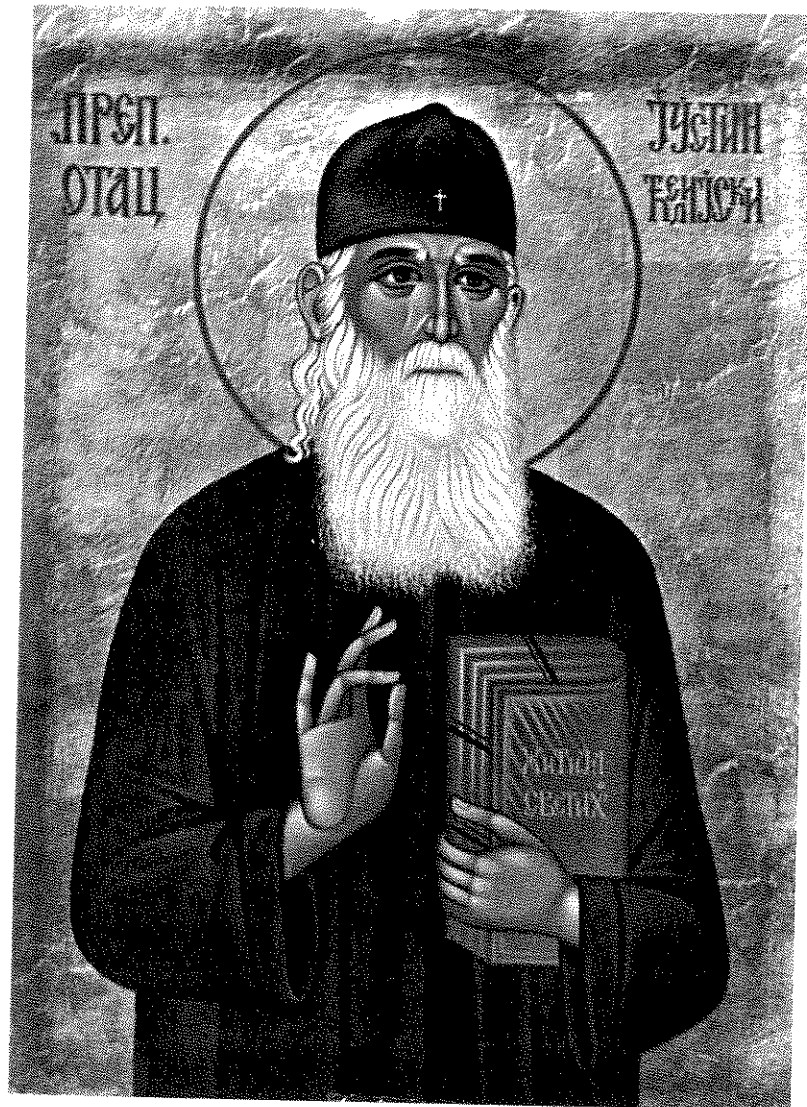
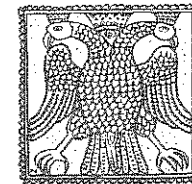
Megalynarion

Rejoice, O God-like Justin, newly manifested morning star of all the Orthodox, who hast in our time illuminated the whole world by the rays of thy divine words and by thine opposition to heresy.

FATHER
JUSTIN POPOVICH

ORTHODOX FAITH AND LIFE IN CHRIST

Translation, Preface, and Introduction
by
ASTERIOS GEROSTERGIOS, *et al.*



BLESSED FATHER JUSTIN POPOVICH (1894–1979)

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PREFACE

The Serbian nation and its Orthodox Church have a long history of more than one thousand years. From the time when Christianity was introduced through the missionary work of the great brothers Cyril and Methodios, the Serbian people have been closely connected with the Greek Christian civilization of Byzantium and the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Serbian land is filled with Christian monuments which bear witness to the particular identity and character of this nation. Since the first archbishop of the Serbian Church St. Savva and his father St. Symeon, both monks and founders of the Hilandar Monastery on the Holy Mountain of Athos, to this day, the Serbian people continue to be a source of saints and important personalities. Among the greatest of these personalities is the late Father and Professor Justin Popovich (1894–1979).

Father Justin occupies a special place in the pan-Orthodox conscience. Until recently, most of his writings remained unpublished due to the difficult political conditions in the Balkan lands. Some of his writings, however, have already been translated into other languages, such as Greek and French. Eulogies are continuously being composed from all parts of the Orthodox world, praising his virtue and his love of the God-man Christ and His Church. Father Justin is considered a very important Orthodox personality, one with pan-Orthodox authority. In addition, many faithful even consider him a saint. Miracles at his grave site are constantly being attributed to him, such as healings, flashes of divine light from his tomb, etc. Icons have been painted and hymns have been composed in his honor. People entreat him in their prayers to intervene with the Lord for assistance.

Due to all of these reasons, we have decided to offer the English-speaking world some of Fr. Justin's remarkable writings related to important issues of the day in book form, such as education, the Church, the philosophical

trends of our time, the so-called Ecumenical Movement, and the Patristic Orthodox Tradition.

In this task we have had the assistance of some of Fr. Justin's spiritual children and admirers of his thought and personality. This volume therefore is a collective work and a common effort, as the blessed father believed and taught, that in the Church everything is a "communal effort."

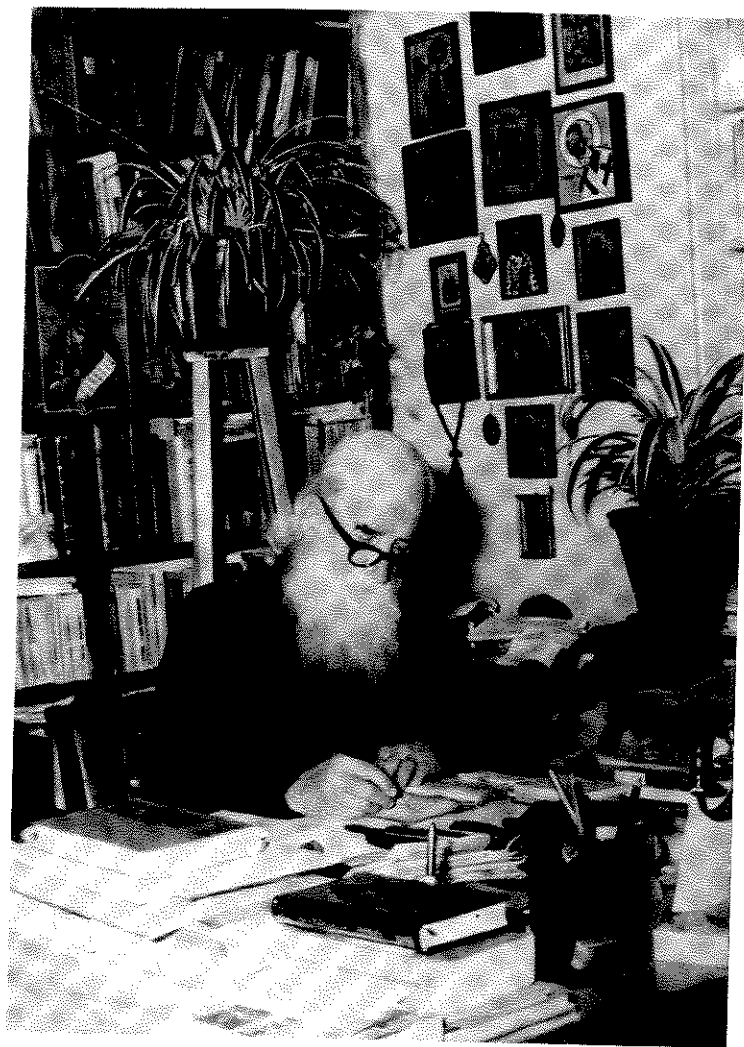
The English translation was made from the original Serbian text and from the Greek version. Among those who worked with me to produce this volume, and whom I want to name here and thank wholeheartedly, are the following friends and co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord. They are: George Sioras of Brookline, Massachusetts, James Skedros, a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard University, and Fr. Steven Yankopoulos, a spiritual man and a devoted priest of the Greek Orthodox Church in America serving the Muskegon Community, for reading and improving my first draft of the English translation; the gifted hymnographer Dr. Haralamambos Boussias of Athens, Greece, for composing for this edition three beautiful hymns in Greek in honor of the blessed Fr. Justin; Milan Stoyanovich, a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard University, for translating the original Serbian text of the bibliography from the official periodical *Theology (Bogoslovlje)* of the Serbian Theological School in Belgrade; the venerable and learned professor and Bishop Athanasios Yevtich of the Serbian Orthodox Church for all of his assistance and encouragement in this publication; Mother Maria (Rule) for the translation of the long and difficult chapter, "The Theory of Knowledge of Saint Isaac the Syrian," which was published serially in 1984 in the magazine *Sourozh*, and my respected teacher and zealous defender of the Orthodox Tradition, Dr. Constantine Cavarinos, President of the Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies for including this volume in the publications of the Institute.

Finally, I owe many thanks to some of my spiritual friends for undertaking part of the financial burden of this edition.

Asterios Gerostergios

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Preface | vii |
| Introduction | 11 |
| The Inward Mission of Our Church | 21 |
| Introduction to the <i>Lives of the Saints</i> | 32 |
| Humanistic and Theanthropic Education | 51 |
| Reflections on the Infallibility of European Man | 97 |
| The Theory of Knowledge of Saint Isaac the Syrian | 117 |
| Humanistic Ecumenism | 169 |
| Selective Writings of Fr. Justin | 197 |
| Bibliography | 221 |
| Index | 237 |



Father Justin Popovich in his study
at the Monastery of the Archangels in Valjevo, Serbia.

INTRODUCTION

In July of 1989, I received a letter from the then Archimandrite and professor of the Orthodox Theological School in Belgrade, Serbia, and now Bishop of Montenegro, Athanasios Yevtich. In his letter he gave me his blessing and some suggestions in relation to the planned volume in English of his Spiritual Father and teacher of the Orthodox Church, Justin Popovich of blessed memory.

This letter was a continuation of our conversation in my home in Boston in the same year when he visited our city for matters concerning the Serbian Orthodox Church. In his letter Bishop Athanasios wrote the following: "As I also told you last May, you have the blessing to publish a selective volume of the holy Father, but I ask you not to make it only anti-ecumenistic, but rather to include all the dimensions of the theological, philosophical, and spiritual thought of Father Justin."

Together with the letter he also sent me some photographs and three of Fr. Justin's works. He recommended they be included in the planned volume in their entirety because, according to Bishop Athanasios, they represent the wealth of Fr. Justin's personality and thought and are proof that Fr. Justin is a great contemporary father and teacher in the Orthodox Church. These three works are included in the present volume:

They are: *The Inward Mission of the Church, Introduction to the Lives of the Saints*, and *The Theory of Knowledge of Saint Isaac the Syrian*. In this way, the English-speaking readers will be able to get to know and appreciate the thinking of the blessed Father Justin.

For those who know Greek, Father Justin is well-known because many of his works have been translated into Greek by his spiritual children and other admirers of his philosophical and theological thinking. Moreover, Father Justin himself wrote a few of his works in the Greek language itself, since he knew the Greek language well. Additionally, he had even made it possible for some of his disciples to be sent to Greece and be educated in the Greek theological schools there. That is why their writings possess the genuine Orthodox spirituality and the patristic thought.

Before I say a few words about the writings of this gifted Father, I will attempt to impart certain information about his life. In this way, it will be more possible to know, understand, and appreciate his theological and philosophical work.

Father Justin Popovich was born on the day of the Annunciation in 1894 in Vranje, Serbia. He was named Blagoye at baptism by his father, Spyridon, and his mother, Anastasia. He came from a priestly family and his pious parents raised him in the authentic piety of the Orthodox Serbian people. He has been, as Bishop Amphilohios Radovich says, "the last link of a line that supplied so many priests during successive generations, the sanctified fruit of a saintly root: blessed the generations, blessed the root which gave such fruit as Father Justin" (*Orthodox Life*, 1981, cited by Jean-Louis Palierne, *L'Homme et Le Dieu-Homme*, 10).

From the time he was a child, he was accustomed to visiting the nearby monastery of the beloved Saint Prochoros Ptchinyskii of the eleventh century. From 1905–1914 he studied at the Theological School of St. Savva in Belgrade. There he was blessed to have as his teacher the famous Bishop of Ochrid, Nicholas Velimirovich, the new Chrysostom of the Serbian Church. In 1916 he dedicated himself to God by becoming a monk. Soon after, the Patriarch Demetrios of Serbia sent the young monk Justin to St. Petersburg, Russia, to get an education in higher theological studies.

In Russia, Fr. Justin became acquainted with the piety of the Russian people, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the persecutions which created numerous martyrs of the Orthodox Church. Then, Fr. Justin left Russia and went to England to continue his theological studies. From England he finally went to Greece, where he stayed for some years in order to learn the Greek language well and study the Fathers of the Church. In particular, Fr. Justin devoted himself to the Fathers of the desert, to the spirituality of the Church, and to the dogmatic and symbolic monuments of the Orthodox Church which he continued to study until the end of his life.

In 1926, Fr. Justin submitted his doctoral dissertation to the Theological School of the University of Athens under the title: *The Problem of Personality and Knowledge According to Saint Macarios of Egypt*. Soon after he began teaching in the seminaries of Karlovtsi, Prizren, and Monastir. In 1927 while at the seminary of Karlovtsi, he published his important study, *The Theory of Knowledge of Saint Isaac the Syrian*, which was as mentioned earlier, is included in the present volume. During this period he published the religious periodical *Christian Life*, as well as the first and second volumes of *Dogmatics of the*

Orthodox Church (1932). In 1935 he was called to teach Dogmatics at the Theological School of Belgrade. In 1938, together with Serbian scholars, he founded the Serbian Philosophical Society. With the ascendancy of Communism in 1945, Fr. Justin was forced to leave the university and live in various monasteries.

From 1948 he was restricted to the convent of the Holy Archangels of Chelie in Valjevo outside of Belgrade, where he completed his theological work. In this monastery, Father Justin lived as an Orthodox priest-monk, offering the Divine Eucharist regularly, praying continually, fasting, meditating, and being vigilant. The fact that he left the university at the age of fifty-one was rather beneficial and productive for his work. Far from the distractions of the world, he devoted himself to his writings and left a very rich legacy to the entire Orthodox world.

In the monastery, moreover, his writing and his spiritual work were carried out in spite of tremendous pressure from the Communist regime. Due to his growing popularity and influence on the Orthodox population, especially towards the end of his life, he worried the state authorities greatly. He became the hidden conscience of the Orthodox Church and the invisible spiritual guide of many devoted Christians (Ioannis Karmiris, *Moral and Religious Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, 548–549). In the monastery he received people daily for confession, giving guidance to many people, especially students. This service continued until the end of his life. He passed away here peacefully, on March 25, 1979 (Old calendar), the day of his birth.

All those Christians, clergy and laity alike, who benefited spiritually have testified about Fr. Justin's genuine love that shone through him during his entire

life, and about his goodness that, like a magnet, drew people towards him. His benevolent attitude and work, though, was not only extended to Christians but to non-believers as well. They speak of his efficacious prayer which gave courage to suffering people. Sometimes, even only his appearance was enough to help his fellow men accept the mystery of the Christian faith and receive the spiritual strength to continue to face the struggles of life.

The blessed Father Justin studied the Holy Scriptures and the lives of the Church Fathers deeply and extensively. He applied their teachings to his daily life. Through this, he received the necessary weapons to strike whatever was not true, genuine, and traditionally Orthodox. His great theological and philosophical education made him capable of composing important works in which he attempts and succeeds in comparing "the philosophy of the world" and "the philosophy of the Holy Spirit." It is evident in all of his writings that philosophical thought and dialectic go together with revealed Truth. His deeply philosophical mind and vast education enabled him to criticize all philosophies and reveal their weak points.

This saintly Father is distinguished for his special love and his undying devotion to the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church. He stood in awe of the great Fathers and teachers of the Church. He especially loved and studied the writings of St. John Chrysostom and those of St. John of Damascus, as well as the writings of St. Macarios of Egypt, St. Isaac the Syrian, and St. Symeon the New Theologian. He is a man centered around Christ, a man anchored in God and in the Fathers of the Orthodox Church. In all of his writings the Christocentric character of his thought is evident, emphasizing the

importance of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church for the well being of the human personality.

Throughout all of his works, Fr. Justin sought the independence of contemporary theology from the influences of scholasticism and the rationalism of the West. His personal aim was to return contemporary theology to the sources of the genuine Patristic theology, which is a struggle of proclaiming and living the faith.

Fr. Justin's mind and heart were purified by prayer and worship. He connected the Serbian Orthodox Church with the great Patristic tradition and enriched his Church with a great treasure. The Serbian Church had never before seen such a great spiritual personality; his works became guides and rules for the life of the pious man. They are teachings on various topics designed for the young and the old, and the armor of the people, used for defense against every anti-Orthodox attack.

This holy Father, through his thousands of pages of writings, is not simply teaching but chanting a new hymn, praising the Savior Jesus Christ. He admires the Orthodox Church deeply, he rejoices in Jesus Christ, and he expresses his gratitude to Him from the depths of his being.

The holy Father is a Christian philosopher, dogmatician, and most importantly a teacher. He is an interpreter of the Holy Scriptures, a saint, and a prophet because he lives the tragedy of men yet remains in the light of God. Therefore, he proclaims the uniqueness of the God-man and His Church and the deviation of contemporary man from the Truth.

In order to express his thoughts and feelings, the holy author coins new words and ways of expression. His purpose is to express his unshakable faith towards the

Savior in order to build the body of the Church and to protect the revealed truths of the Gospel from heretical misinterpretations. He considers the latter to be a great calamity, not only for the Church but for the entire world.

Father Justin believes that the Orthodox Church possesses the entire, revealed Truth and the ability to satisfy all of the needs of man in a greater way than he could ever imagine or expect. The Christian faith not only concerns a certain group of people but is the matter of salvation of all Creation and should therefore be applied to all forms of life.

The Orthodox faith and its wealth of tradition has at its center not some abstract moral principles but the true heartbeat and rhythm of life and the Universe, the nucleus of all things on Earth, the God-man Jesus Christ, Who gives its purpose to mankind. Only in this way does Creation receive its true meaning and can man follow the correct path to salvation (*Orthodox Church and Ecumenism*, Thessaloniki, 5-10). However, Western man, through his civilization, his education, his sciences, his society, and his philosophy, has substituted for it the content and the rhythm of the material world and of life in general. For this reason the God-man in human life is in danger of being completely destroyed by His own creations (*Ibid*, pg. 11). By expelling Christ from life, His place has been taken over by de-spiritualized man.

The holy Father connects the God-man Jesus with the Church, with the Creation, with the evangelical truths and the evangelical life, and with the Holy Mysteries and the virtues, and overturns the entire scholastic theological system. He belongs to the great line of the defenders of the Orthodox faith against the Western interpretation of the Christian Truths (*Ibid*. 11-12).

The blessed Fr. Justin was a wise and renowned theologian and philosopher, a loud, piercing preacher of the "saving Truth," a defender of the Holy Tradition, a confessor in word and in deed, and a great contemporary Father of the Orthodox Church.

The bulk of his work was published in the Serbian language. In the past two decades, however, some of his works have begun to appear in other languages (besides Greek), such as French and English. His works are markedly original and very vivid in expression, and have provoked the admiration of many people.

Throughout his long life, first as a seminarian, then as a monk, a post-graduate student, a priest, an editor of the Church periodical, a teacher of theology, and a father confessor, he continued to grow in stature and reputation. This growing process, moreover, has continued up to the present day, and will continue for a long time to come. He became the wise interpreter and the firm defender of the Tradition of the Orthodox Church and a living example that has proved that this theology and Tradition are not dry or dead, but a living force, capable of speaking to man throughout the ages.

The following are the titles of the most important of the writings of Father Justin: *The Problem of the Personality and Knowledge According to Saint Macarios of Egypt* (c. 1926, in Greek); *Dogmatics of the Orthodox Church* (Vols. 1 and 2, 1932–1935; Vols. 3 and 4, published recently); *The Philosophy and Religion of Dostoevsky*; *The Theory of Knowledge of Saint Isaac the Syrian* (c. 1927); *The Essence of Orthodox Axiology and Criteriology* (c. 1935); *Elementary Theology* (c. 1939); *Dostoevsky, Europe, and the Slavic World* (c. 1940); *The Philosophy of Life According to St. Savva* (c. 1955); *The Philosophical Abyss*; (c. 1957); *The Lives of St. Savva and St. Symeon* (c. 1962); *The Orthodox*

Church and Ecumenism (c. 1974); *The Lives of the Saints of the Orthodox Church* (12 Vols.; c.1972–1977); commentaries on the entire New Testament (many volumes); new translations of many liturgical texts from the original Greek texts, among them the Liturgies of St. Basil the Great, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Gregory the Dialogue; a devotional prayer book; the small and great *Horologion*; akathist hymns to many saints; and *Lives of the Saints* (Vol. 13, containing the period of the *Triodion* and the *Pentekostarion*).

Among his countless articles on various subjects, are the following: "The Spirit of This World," "The Inward Mission of Our Church," "From the Ancient Aryanism to the Modern European Aryanism," "The Martyrdom of the Russian Church and its Saints," "The Gates of Immortality," "The Gospel of Heaven and Earth," "The Resurrection of the God-man Christ," "The Planned 'Great Synod' of the Orthodox Church," and "The Planned Oecumenical Synod."

Many of these articles and other works or parts of them have been translated into Greek and French and have been published as independent volumes, such as: *Man and God-man* (in Greek in 1969, and then in French in 1982); *The Way of the Knowledge of God, Ascetic, and Gnosiological Chapters* (c. 1992); *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism* (c. 1974); *Commentary of the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians* (c. 1989); and *The Three Catholic Epistles of St. John* (c. 1989).

In the present volume, seven complete works of Fr. Justin are offered in English as well as selected parts of his various works, mostly from his commentaries on the books of the New Testament. The translations were done from the Greek texts, which were translated from the original Serbian texts by Fr. Justin's spiritual sons

Bishops Athanasios Yevtich and Amphilohios Radovich, and others. In addition, a bibliography and a general index are offered here, as well as some photographs of the blessed Father Justin which illuminate the text and familiarize the reader with the author.

I have chosen the title of this volume, *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ*, because these texts of the God-bearing Father Justin have one purpose, namely, to teach us the Orthodox faith and guide us in the true Christian life.

This publication is an offering of gratitude and of recognition of the past and present sacrifices of the Serbian Orthodox Church for its defense of the Evangelical Truth against all known and unknown enemies of the Orthodox Faith. The readers of this volume are asked to put in their prayers our brothers and sisters in the Faith. May the Lord shorten the grief and suffering of the Orthodox Serbian people and their holy Church, and bestow upon them their much needed unity and peace.

Asterios Gero Stergios

Belmont, Massachusetts
September, 1994

THE INWARD MISSION OF OUR CHURCH

Bringing About Orthodoxy

It is very, very difficult indeed for infinite and eternal life to make its way into the human soul—so narrow—and into the even narrower human body. Held behind bars, the inhabitants of this earth suspiciously stand their ground against anything coming from without. Cast into this prison of time and space they are unable—from atavism or perhaps from inertia—to bear being penetrated by something outlasting time, outlying space, something which surpasses these, and is eternal. Such an invasion is considered to be aggression towards them and they respond with war. A man, given the fact that he is being corrupted by the "moth" of time, does not like the intrusion of eternity into his life and is not easily able to adapt himself to it. He often considers this intrusion to be sheer unforgivable insolence. At certain times he might become a hardened rebel against eternity because in the face of it he perceives his own minuteness; at others he even experiences fierce hatred towards it because he views it through such a human prism, one that is all-too earthbound, all-too worldly. Plunged bodily into matter, bound by the force of gravity to time and space, and having his spirit quite divorced from eternity, the world-weary man takes no pleasure in those arduous expeditions towards the eternal, towards

what lies beyond. The chasm existing between time and eternity is quite unbridgeable for him because he lacks the strength and ability needed to get across it. Thoroughly besieged by death, he covers with scorn all those who say to him, "Man is immortal; he is eternal." Immortal in just what respect? In his mortal body? In what respect eternal? With respect to his feeble spirit?

In order for a person to be immortal he must, at the very core of his sense of self, feel himself immortal. For him to be eternal, in his center of consciousness of self he must know himself eternal. Without doing this, for him both immortality and eternity alike will be conditions imposed from the outside. And if at one time Man did have this sense of immortality and awareness of eternity, he had it so long ago that it has since wasted away under the weight of death. And waste away it really has; we learn this from the whole mysterious makeup of human beings. Our whole problem lies in how we might rekindle that extinguished feeling, how we might revive the wasted-away awareness. Human beings are not in a position to do this; nor, indeed, are the "transcendental gods" of philosophy. It is something to be done by God, who incarnated His immortal Self inside man's sense of himself and incarnated His eternal Self within man's self-awareness. Christ did precisely this when he was made man and became God-human. Only in Christ, in Him alone, did man feel himself immortal and know himself eternal. Christ God-human, in His Person, bridged that chasm between time and eternity and restored relations between them. For this reason only he who is organically made one with Christ God-human, one with his body, the Church, can be the one to feel himself really immortal and know himself in truth to be eternal. Whereby, for man and for humanity,

Christ composes the one and only passage and transition from time to eternity: This is why in the Church, the Orthodox Church, Christ became and remained the one and only way and the single guide from the former to the latter, from the sense of one's own mortality to the sense of one's immortality, from self-awareness of what is transient to self-awareness of what is eternal and without dimension.

The ever-living personality of God-human Christ is precisely the Church. The Church is always personality, God-human body and spirit. The definition of Church, her life, her purpose, her spirit, her plan, her ways, all these are given in the wondrous Person of God-human Christ. Hence, the mission of the Church is to make every one of her faithful, organically and in person, one with the Person of Christ; to turn their sense of self into a sense of Christ, and their self-knowledge (self-awareness) into Christ-knowledge (Christ-awareness); for their life to become the life in Christ and for Christ; their personality to become personality in Christ and for Christ; that within them might live not they themselves but Christ in them (Gal. 2: 20). The mission of the Church is still to bring about in her members the conviction that the proper state of human personhood is composed of immortality and eternity and not of the realm of time and mortality... and the conviction that man is a wayfarer who is wending his way in the sway of time and mortality towards immortality and all eternity.

The Church is God-human, eternity incarnated within the boundaries of time and space. She is here in this world but she is not of this world (John 18: 36). She is in the world in order to raise it on high where she herself has her origin. The Church is ecumenical,

catholic, God-human, ageless, and it is therefore a blasphemy—an unpardonable blasphemy against Christ and against the Holy Ghost—to turn the Church into a national institution, to narrow her down to petty, transient, time-bound aspirations and ways of doing things. Her purpose is beyond nationality, oecumenical, all-embracing: to unite all men in Christ, all without exception to nation or race or social strata. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3: 28), because "Christ is all, and in all." The means and methods of this all-human God-human union of all in Christ have been provided by the Church, through the holy sacraments and in her God-human works (ascetic exertions, virtues). And so it is: in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist the ways of Christ and the means of uniting all people are composed and defined and integrated. Through this mystery, man is made organically one with Christ and with all the faithful. Likewise by ascetically exerting the God-human virtues: faith, prayer, fasting, love, meekness, thorough compassion and giving, alms, a man consolidates himself in this union and preserves himself in its sanctity, personally experiencing Christ both as the unity of his own personality and as the essence of his union with the other members of the body of Christ, the Church.

The Church is the personhood of the God-human Christ, a God-human organism and not a human organization. The Church is indivisible, as is the person of the God-human, as is the body of the God-human. For this reason it is a fundamental error to have the God-human organism of the Church divided into little national organizations. In the course of their procession down

through history many local Churches have limited themselves to nationalism, to national methods and aspirations, ours being among them. The Church has adapted herself to the people when it should properly be just the reverse: the people adapting themselves to the Church. This mistake has many a time been made by our Church here. But we very well know that these were the "tares" of our Church life, tares which the Lord will not uproot, leaving them rather to grow with the wheat until the time of harvest (Matth. 13, 29–30). We also well know (the Lord so taught us) that these tares have their origin in our primeval enemy and enemy of Christ: the devil (Matth. 13, 25–28). But we wield this knowledge in vain if it is not transformed into prayer, the prayer that in time to come Christ will safeguard us from becoming the sowers and cultivators of such tares ourselves.

It is now high time—the twelfth hour—time for our Church representatives to cease being nothing but the servants of nationalism and for them to become bishops and priests of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The mission of the Church, given by Christ and put into practice by the Holy Fathers, is this: that in the soul of our people be planted and cultivated a sense and awareness that every member of the Orthodox Church is a Catholic Person, a person who is for ever and ever, and is God-human; that each person is Christ's, and is therefore a brother to every human being, a ministering servant to all men and all created things. This is the Christ-given objective of the Church. Any other is not an objective of Christ but of the Antichrist. For our local Church to be the Church of Christ, the Church Catholic, this objective must be brought about continuously among our people. And yet what are the means of

accomplishing this God-human objective? Once again, the means are themselves God-human because a God-human objective can only be brought about exclusively by God-human means, never by human ones or by any others. It is on this point that the Church differs radically from anything which is human or of this earth.

These means are none other than the God-human ascetic exertions and virtues. And these can be successfully practiced only by God-human, Christ-bearing ascetics. God-human virtues exist in an organic kinship. Each has its source in the other and they bring one another to completion.

First among the ascetic virtues is the effort of faith: The souls of our people must pass through, and constantly be passing through, this exertion; meaning that these souls may then be given up to Christ as having no reservations and being without compromises; having extended down to the God-human depths and ascended to the God-human heights. It is essential to create in our people the sense that the faith of Christ is a virtue beyond nationhood, being ecumenical and catholic, trinitarian; and that for someone to believe in Christ entails their waiting on Christ, and only on Christ, with every event of their lives.

The second ascetic virtue is the God-human virtue of prayer and fasting: This being a virtue which must become the way of life of our Orthodox people, becoming the soul of their souls, because prayer and fasting are the all-powerful, Christ-given means of purging not only the human personhood but also society, the people, and the human race at large, of every defilement. It is prayer and fasting which are able to cleanse our people's souls from our defilements and sinning (Matth. 17, 19-21; Luke 9, 17-29). The souls of our people must fall

in step with the orthodox life of prayer. Prayer and fasting are not to be performed merely for the individual, or for one people, but for everyone and everything ("in all and for all"): for friends and for enemies, for those who persecute us and those who put us to death, because that is how Christians are to be distinguished from the Gentiles (Matth. 5, 44-45).

The third God-human virtue is that of love: That love which knows no bounds, which does not question who is worthy and who is not, but loves them all; loving friends and enemies, loving sinners and evildoers, without however loving their sins and their crimes. It blesses the accursed, and as the sun does, it shines both on the evil and the good (Matth. 5: 45-46). This God-human love must be cultivated in our people because its catholic character is what sets it apart from other self-proclaimed and relative loves: from that of the pharisaic sort, the humanist, the altruistic, the nationalist, and likewise from animal love. The love of Christ is all-embracing love, always. By prayer it is acquired because it is a gift of Christ. Now the Orthodox heart prays with intensity: Lord of love, this love of yours for everyone and for all things—give it to me!

The fourth ascetic virtue is the God-human virtue of meekness and humility. Only he who is meek at heart can appease fierce hearts that are in uproar: only he who is lowly in heart can humble proud and haughty souls. To be "showing all meekness unto all men" is the obligation of every truthful Christian (Tit. 3:2). But a person becomes truly meek and humble when he turns his heart of hearts into the Lord Jesus, humble and meek, He being the only truly "meek and lowly in heart" (Matth. 11:29). The soul of the people must be rendered meek by Christ's meekness. Every person must learn to

pray: Meek, gentle Lord, assuage my fierce soul! The Lord humbled himself with the greatest humility—he was incarnate and became man. Should you be of Christ, then humble yourself as a worm: embed your flesh in the pain of all who are in pain, of everyone sorrowing and in grief; in the trial of everyone who, impassioned, is thus tormented; and in the trauma of every animal and bird. Humble yourself lower than them all: be all things to all men, but be of Christ and according to Christ. When you are by yourself, then pray: O humble Lord, by your humility, humble me!

The fifth ascetic virtue is the God-human virtue of patience and humility: Which is to say, to endure ill-use, not to render evil for evil, to forgive in total compassion all assault, slander, and hurt. This is what it is to be of Christ: to feel yourself perpetually crucified to the world, persecuted by it, violated and spat-upon. The world will not tolerate Christ-bearing men just as it would not tolerate Christ. Martyrdom is the state in which a Christian brings forth fruit. This must be imparted to our people. For the Orthodox, martyrdom is purification. Being Christian does not simply mean to bear suffering cheerfully, but to pardon in compassion those who cause it, to pray to God for them as did Christ and the archdeacon Stephen. And so, pray: Long-suffering Lord, give me forbearance; make me magnanimous and meek!

Our Church's mission is to infuse these God-human virtues and ascetic exertions into the people's way of living; to have their life and soul knit firm with the Christlike God-human virtues. For therein lies the soul's salvation from the world and from all those soul-destroying, death-dealing, and Godless organizations of the world. In response to the "erudite" atheism and

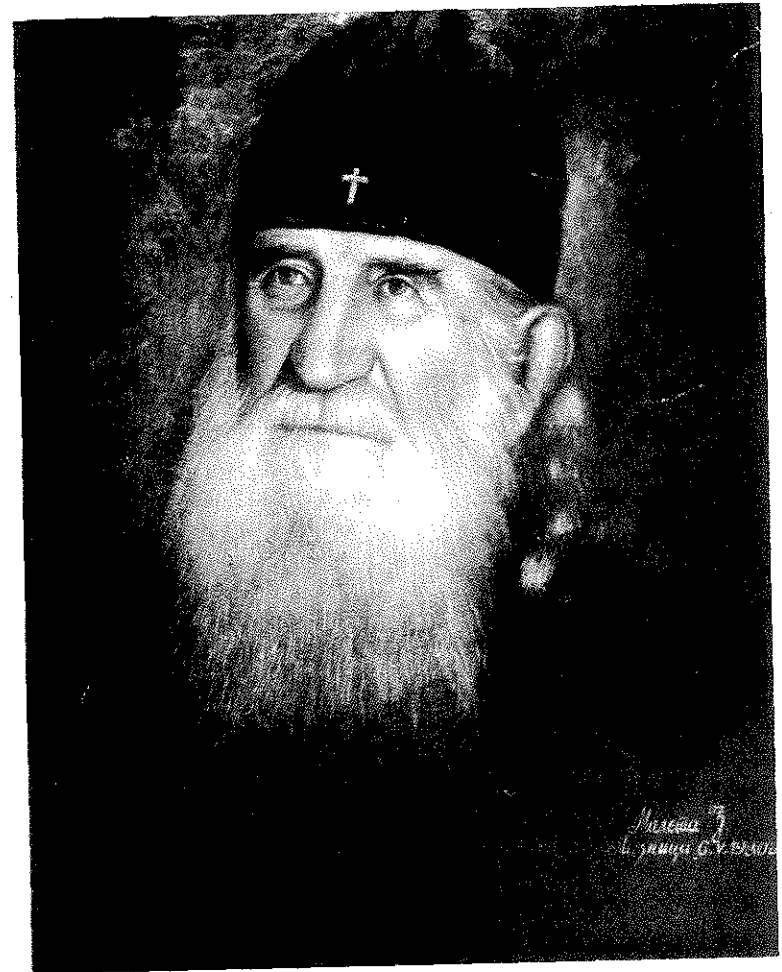
refined cannibalism of contemporary civilization we must give place to those Christ-bearing personalities, who with the meekness of sheep will put down the roused lust of wolves, and with the harmlessness of doves will save the soul of the people from cultural and political putrefaction. We must execute ascetic effort in Christ's name as response to the cultural exercising which is performed in the name of the decayed and disfigured European being, in the name of Atheism, Civilization, or the Antichrist. Which is why the major task of our Church is the creation of such Christ-bearing ascetics. The watchword which should be heard within the Church today is: Let us return to the Christ-bearing ascetics and to the Holy Fathers! To resume the exertions and the virtues of the Holy Fathers! To resume the virtues of St. Anthony, St. Athanasios, St. Basil, and St. Gregory, of Sts. Sergios and Seraphim of the Russians, of Sts. Savva, Prochios, and Gabriel of the Serbs, and others like them because it was these God-human virtues which brought about St. Anthony, St. Gregory, and St. Savva. And today only Orthodox ascetic efforts and virtues can bring about sanctity in every soul, in the soul of all our people—seeing that the God-human objective of the Church is unalterable and its means are likewise so, since Christ is indeed the same, yesterday and today and unto all ages (Heb. 13: 8). Herein lies the difference between the world of men and the one in Christ: the human world is transient and time-bound, whilst that of Christ is as ever whole, for ever more. Orthodoxy, as the single vessel and guardian of the perfect and radiant Person of God-human Christ, is brought about exclusively by this exertion of virtues by grace, through entirely God-human Orthodox means, not through borrowings from Roman Catholicism or

Protestantism because the latter are forms of Christianity after the pattern of the proud European being, and not of the humble God-human being.

This mission of the Church is facilitated by God Himself because among our people there exists an ascetic spirit as created by Orthodoxy through the centuries. The Orthodox soul of our people leans towards the Holy Fathers and the Orthodox ascetics. Ascetic exertion, at the personal, family, and parish level, particularly of prayer and fasting, is the characteristic of Orthodoxy. Our people is a people of Christ, an Orthodox people, because—as Christ did—it sums up the Gospel in these two virtues: prayer and fasting. And it is a people convinced that all defilement, all foul thoughts, can be driven out of man by these alone (Matth. 17:21). In its heart of hearts our people knows Christ and Orthodoxy, it knows just what it is that makes an Orthodox person Orthodox. Orthodoxy will always generate ascetic rebirth. She recognizes no other.

The Ascetics are Orthodoxy's only missionaries. Asceticism is her only missionary school. Orthodoxy is ascetic effort and it is life, and it is thus by effort and by life that her mission is broadcast and brought about. The development of asceticism... this ought to be the inward mission of our Church amongst our people. The parish must become an ascetic focal point. But this can only be achieved by an ascetic priest. Prayer and fasting, the Church-oriented life of The parish, a life of liturgy: Orthodoxy holds these as the primary ways of effecting rebirth in its people. the parish, the parish community, must be regenerated and in Christ-like and brotherly love must minister humbly to Him and to all people, meek and lowly and in a spirit of sacrifice and self-denial. And such service must be imbued and nourished

by prayer and the liturgical life. This much is groundwork and indispensable. But to this end there exists one prerequisite: that our Bishops, priests, and our monks become ascetics themselves. That this might be, then: Let Us Beseech the Lord.



INTRODUCTION TO THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

U ntil the coming of the Lord Christ into our terrestrial world, we men really knew only about death and death knew about us. Everything human was penetrated, captured, and conquered by death. Death was closer to us than we ourselves and more real than we ourselves, and more powerful, incomparably more powerful than every man individually and all men together. Earth was a dreadful prison of death, and we people were the helpless slaves of death.¹ Only with the God-man Christ "life was manifested"; "eternal life" appeared to us hopeless mortals, the wretched slaves of death.² And that "eternal life" we men have "seen with our eyes and handled with our hands,"³ and we Christians "make manifest eternal life" to all.⁴ For living in union with the Lord Christ, we live eternal life even here on earth.⁵ We know from personal experience that Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life.⁶ And for

¹cf. Heb. 2: 14-15.

²cf. 1 John 1: 2.

³cf. 1 John 1: 1.

⁴cf. 1 John 1: 2.

⁵cf. 1 John 1: 3.

⁶cf. 1 John 5: 20.

this did He come into the world: to show us the true God and eternal life in Him.¹ Genuine and true love for man consists of this, only of this: that God sent His Only-Begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him (1 John 4: 9) and through Him live eternal life. Therefore, he who has the Son of God has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life (1 John 5: 12)—he is completely in death. Life in the one true God and Lord Jesus Christ is really our only true life because it is wholly eternal and completely stronger than death. Can a life which is infected by death and which ends in death really be called life? Just as honey is not honey when it is mixed with a poison which gradually turns all the honey into poison, so a life which ends in death is not life.

There is no end to the love of the Lord Christ for man: because for us men to acquire the life eternal which is in Him, and to live by Him, nothing is required of us—not learning, nor glory, nor wealth, nor anything else that one of us does not have, but rather only that which each of us can have. And that is? Faith in the Lord Christ. For this reason did He, the Only Friend of Man, reveal to the human race this wondrous good tidings: God so loved the world that He gave His Only-Begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. He that believes in the Son has eternal life (John 3: 16-36). As the one true God giving people what no angel or man can give them, the Lord Christ alone in the human race had the boldness and right to declare: verily, verily I say unto you:

¹cf. 1 John 5: 11.

he that believes in me has eternal life (John 6: 47), and he has already passed from death unto life (John 5: 24).

Faith in the Lord Christ unites man with the eternal Lord Who, according to the measure of man's faith, pours out in his soul eternal life so that he then feels and realizes himself to be eternal. And this he feels to a greater degree inasmuch as he lives according to that faith which gradually sanctifies his soul, heart, conscience, his entire being, by the grace-filled Divine energies. In proportion to the faith of a man the sanctification of his nature increases. And the holier the man is, the stronger and more vivid is his feeling of personal immortality and the consciousness of his own and everybody else's immortality.

Actually, a man's real life begins with his faith in the Lord Christ, which commits all his soul, all his heart, all his strength to the Lord Christ, Who gradually sanctifies, transfigures, deifies them. And through that sanctification, transfiguration, and deification the grace-filled Divine energies, which give him the all-powerful feeling and consciousness of personal immortality and personal eternity, are poured out upon him. In reality, our life is life inasmuch as it is in Christ. And as much as it is in Christ is shown by its holiness: the holier a life, the more immortal and more eternal it is.

Opposed to this process is death. What is death? Death is ripened sin; and ripened sin is separation from God, in Whom alone is life and the source of life. This truth is evangelical and Divine: holiness is life, sinfulness is death; piety is life, atheism is death; faith is life, unbelief is death; God is life, the devil is death. Death is separation from God, and life is returning to God and living in God. Faith is indeed the revival of the soul from lethargy, the resurrection of the soul from the

dead: "he was dead, and is alive: (Luke 15: 24). Man experienced this resurrection of the soul from death for the first time with the God-man Christ and constantly experiences it in His holy Church, since all of Him is found in Her. And He gives Himself to all believers through the holy mysteries and the holy virtues. Where He is, there is no longer death: there one has already passed from death to life. With the Resurrection of Christ we celebrate the deadening of death, the beginning of a new, eternal life.¹

True life on earth indeed begins from the Resurrection of the Savior, for it does not end in death. Without the Resurrection of Christ human life is nothing else but a gradual dying which finally inevitably ends in death. Real true life is that life which does not end in death. And such a life became possible on earth only with the Resurrection of the Lord Christ the God-man. Life is real life only in God, for it is a holy life and by virtue of this an immortal life. Just as in sin is death, so in holiness is immortality. Only with faith in the risen Lord Christ does man experience the most crucial miracle of his existence: the passover from death to immortality, from transitoriness into eternity, from hell to heaven. Only then does man find himself, his true self, his eternal self: "for he was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (Luke 15: 24).

What are Christians? Christians are Christ-bearers, and by virtue of this bearers and possessors of eternal life, and this according to the measure of faith and according to the measure of holiness which is from faith. The Saints are the most perfect Christians, for they have

¹cf. *Paschal Canon*, Ode 7 (Translator's note).

been sanctified to the highest degree with the *podvigs* of holy faith in the risen and eternally-living Lord Christ and no death has power over them. Their life is entirely from the Lord Christ, and for this reason it is entirely Christ's life; and their thought is entirely Christ's thought; and their perception is Christ's perception. All that they have is first Christ's and then theirs. If the soul, it is first Christ's and then theirs: if life, it is first Christ's and then theirs. In them is nothing of themselves but rather wholly and in everything the Lord Christ.

Therefore, the Lives of the Saints are nothing else but the life of the Lord Christ, repeated in every saint to a greater or lesser degree in this or that form. More precisely it is the life of the Lord Christ continued through the Saints, the life of the incarnate God the Logos, the God-man Jesus Christ who became man. This was so that as man He could give and transmit to us His divine life; so that as God by His life he could sanctify and make immortal and eternal our human life on earth. "For both he who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one" (Heb. 2: 11).

The Lord Christ made this possible and realizable in the world of man from the time that He became man, partook of flesh and blood, and thus became a Brother of man, a Brother according to flesh and blood.¹ Having become man but having remained God, the God-man led a holy, sinless, Divine-human life on earth, and by this life, death, and Resurrection, annihilated the devil and his dominion of death and by this act gave and constantly gives His grace-filled energies to those who

¹cf. Heb. 2: 14-17.

believe in Him, so that they may annihilate the devil and every death and every temptation.¹ That Divine-human life is found entirely in the Divine-human Body of Christ—the Church—and is constantly experienced in the Church as an earthly-heavenly whole, and by individuals according to the measure of their faith.

The lives of the saints are in fact the life of the God-man Christ, which is poured out into His followers and is experienced by them in His Church. For the smallest part of this life is always directly from Him because He is life,² infinite and boundless and eternal life, which by His Divine power vanquished all deaths and resurrects from all deaths. According to the all-true and good tidings of the All-True One: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11: 25). The miraculous Lord who is completely "resurrection and life" is in His Church in His whole being as Divine-human reality, and consequently there is no end to the duration of this reality. His life is continued through all ages; every Christian is of the same body with Christ,³ and he is a Christian because he lives the Divine-human life of this Body of Christ as Its organic cell.

Who is a Christian? A Christian is a man who lives by Christ and in Christ. The commandment of the Holy Gospel of God is divine: "live worthily of God" (Col. 1: 10). God, Who became incarnate and Who as the God-man has in entirety remained in His Church, which lives eternally by Him. And one lives "worthily of God" when one lives according to the Gospel of Christ. Therefore,

¹cf. Heb. 2: 14, 15, 18.

²cf. John 14: 6; 1: 4.

³cf. Eph. 3: 6.

this Divine commandment of the Holy Gospel is also natural: "Live worthily of the Gospel of Christ" (Phillip. 1: 27).

Life according to the Gospel, holy life, Divine life, that is the natural and normal life for Christians. For Christians, according to their vocation, are holy: That good tiding and commandment resounds throughout the whole Gospel of the New Testament.¹ To become completely holy, both in soul and in body, that is our vocation.² This is not a miracle, but rather the norm, the rule of faith. The commandment of the Holy Gospel is clear and most clear: as the Holy One who has called you is Holy, so be ye holy in all manner of life (1 Peter 1: 15). And that means that according to Christ the Holy One, Who, having been incarnate and become man, showed forth in Himself a completely holy life, and as such commands men: "be ye holy, for I am Holy" (1 Peter 1: 16). He has the right to command this, for having become man He gives men as Himself, the Holy One, all the Divine energies which necessary for a holy and pious life in this world.³ Having united themselves spiritually and by Grace to the Holy One—the Lord Christ—with the help of faith, Christians themselves receive from Him the holy energies that they may lead a holy life.

Living by Christ, the saints can do the works of Christ, for by Him they become not only powerful but

¹cf. 1 Thes. 4: 3,7; Rm. 1: 7; 1 Cor. 1: 2; Eph. 1: 1-18, 2: 19, 5: 3, 6: 18; Phillip. 1: 1, 4: 21-22; Col. 1: 2-4, 12, 22, 26; 1 Thes. 3: 13, 5: 27; 2 Tim. 1: 9; Phlm. 5: 7; Heb. 3: 1, 6: 10, 13: 24; Jude 3.

²cf. 1 Thes. 5: 22-23.

³cf. 2 Peter 1: 3.

all-powerful: "I can do all things in Christ Jesus who strengthens me" (Phillip. 4: 13). And in them is clearly realized the truth of the All-True One, that those who believe in Him will do His works and will do greater things than these: "Verily, verily I say unto you: he that believeth in me, the works that I do he shall do also and greater works than these shall he do" (John 14: 12). And truly: the shadow of the Apostle Peter healed; by a word St. Mark the Ascetic moved and stopped a mountain... When God became man, then Divine life became human life, Divine power became human power, Divine truth became human truth, and Divine righteousness became human righteousness: everything which is God's became man's.

What are the "Acts of the Holy Apostles"? They are the acts of Christ which the Holy Apostles do by the power of Christ, or better still: they do them by Christ Who is in them and acts through them. And what are the lives of the Holy Apostles? They are the living of Christ's life which in the Church is transmitted to all faithful followers of Christ and is continued through them with the help of the holy mysteries and the holy virtues.

And what are the "Lives of the Saints"? They are nothing else but a certain kind of continuation of the "Acts of the Apostles." In them is found the same Gospel, the same life, the same truth, the same righteousness, the same love, the same faith, the same eternity, the same "power from on high," the same God and Lord. For "the Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever" (Heb. 13: 8): the same for all people of all times, distributing the same gifts and the same Divine energies to all who believe in Him. This continuation of all life-creating Divine energies in the

Church of Christ from ages to ages and from generation to generation indeed constitutes living Holy Tradition. This Holy Tradition is continued without interruption as the life of Grace in all Christians, in whom through the holy mysteries and the holy virtues, Jesus Christ lives by His Grace. He is wholly present in His Church, for She is His fullness: "the fullness of Him who filleth all in all" (Eph. 1: 23). And the God-man Christ is the all-perfect fullness of the Godhead: "for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2: 4). And Christians must, with the help of the holy mysteries and the holy virtues, fill themselves with "all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3: 19).

The Lives of the Saints show forth those persons filled with Christ God, those Christ-bearing persons, those holy persons in whom is preserved and through whom is transmitted the holy tradition of that holy grace-filled life. It is preserved and transmitted by means of holy evangelical living. For the lives of the saints are holy evangelical truths which are translated into our human life by grace and *podvigs* (asceticism). There is no evangelical truth which cannot be transformed into human life. They were all brought by Christ God for one purpose: to become our life, our reality, our possession, our joy. And the saints, all, without exception, live these Divine truths as the center of their lives and the essence of their being. For this reason the "Lives" of the Saints are a proof and a testimony: that our origin is in heaven; that we are not from this world but from that one; that a man is a true man only in God; that on earth one lives by heaven; that "our conversation is in heaven" (Phillip. 3: 20); that our task is to make ourselves heavenly, feeding ourselves with the "heavenly bread"

which came down to earth.¹ And He came down to feed us with eternal Divine truth, eternal Divine good, eternal Divine righteousness, eternal Divine love, eternal Divine life through Holy Communion, through living in the one true God and Lord Jesus Christ.²

In other words, our vocation is to fill ourselves with the Lord Christ, with His Divine life-creating energies, to live in Christ and to make ourselves christs. If you set about this you are already in heaven although you walk on earth; you are already wholly in God even though your being has remained within the limits of human nature. The man who makes himself a christ surpasses himself, as man, by God, by the God-man, in Whom is given the perfect image of the true, real whole man in the image of God; and in Him are also given the all-vanquishing Divine energies, by the help of which man raises himself above every sin, above every death, above every hell; and this he does by the Church and in the Church, which all the powers of hell cannot overcome, because in Her is the whole wondrous God-man the Lord Christ, with all His Divine energies, His truths, His realities, His perfections, His lives, His eternities.

The Lives of the Saints are holy testimonies of the miraculous power of our Lord Jesus Christ. In reality they are the testimonies of the Acts of the Apostles, only continued throughout the ages. The saints are nothing other than holy witnesses, like the Holy Apostles who were the first witnesses—of what?, of the God-man Jesus Christ: of Him crucified, resurrected, ascended into heaven and eternally alive; about His all-saving Gospel

¹cf. John 6: 33, 35, 51.

²cf. John 6: 50, 51, 53-57.

which is unceasingly written with evangelical holy deeds from generation to generation, for the Lord Christ, who is always the same, constantly works miracles by His Divine power through His holy witnesses. The Holy Apostles are the first holy witnesses of the Lord Christ and His Divine-human economy of the salvation of the world, and their lives are living and immortal testimonies of the Gospel of the Savior as the new life, the life of grace, holy, Divine, Divine-human and therefore always miraculous, miraculous and true as the Savior's life itself is miraculous and true.

And who are the Christians? Christians are those through whom the holy Divine-human life of Christ is continued from generation to generation until the end of the world and of time, and they all make up one body, the Body of Christ—the Church: they are sharers of the Body of Christ and members of one another.¹ The stream of immortal divine life began to flow and still flows unceasingly from the Lord Christ, and through him Christians flow into eternal life. Christians are the Gospel of Christ continued throughout all the ages of the race of men. In the Lives of the Saints, everything is ordinary as in the Holy Gospel, but everything is extraordinary as in the Holy Gospel—both one and the other, uniquely true and real. And everything is true and real by the same Divine-human reality; and the same holy power—Divine and human—bears witness to it: Divine in an all-perfect way, and human—also in an all-perfect way.

What are the Lives of the Saints? Behold, we are in heaven, for earth becomes heaven through the Saints of

¹1 Cor. 12: 27, 12–14, 10: 17; Rom. 12: 5; Eph. 3: 6.

God. Behold, we are among angels in the flesh, among Christ-bearers. And whoever they are, the Lord is completely in them, and with them, and among them; and there is the whole Eternal Divine Truth, and the whole Eternal Divine Righteousness, and the whole Eternal Divine Love, and the whole Eternal Divine Life.

What are the Lives of the Saints? Behold, we are in Paradise, in which everything which is Divine, holy, immortal, eternal, righteous, true, and evangelical grows and increases. For by the Cross in every one of the saints the tree of eternal, Divine, immortal life blossomed and brought forth much fruit. And the Cross leads to heaven; it leads even us after the thief, who for our encouragement entered Paradise first after the All-Holy Divine Cross-bearer—the Lord Christ—and entered with a cross of repentance.

What are the Lives of the Saints? Behold, we are in eternity: no longer is there time, for in the Saints of God Eternal Divine Truth, Eternal Divine Righteousness, Eternal Divine Love, Eternal Divine Life reign and rule. And in them there is no longer any death, for their entire being is filled with the resurrecting Divine energies of the Risen Lord Christ, the Only Vanquisher of death, of all deaths in all worlds. There is no death in them—in holy people: their whole being is filled with the Only Immortal One—the All-Immortal One: the Lord and God Jesus Christ. Among them—we are on earth among the only true immortals: they have conquered all deaths, all sins, all passions, all demons, all hells. When we are with them, no death can harm us, for they are the lightning-rods of death. There is no thunderbolt with which death can strike us when we are with them, among them, in them.

Saints are people who live on earth by holy, eternal Divine truths. That is why the Lives of the Saints are actually applied dogmatics, for in them all the holy eternal dogmatic truths are experienced in all their life-creating and creative energies. In The Lives of the Saints it is most evidently shown that dogmas are not only ontological truths in themselves and for themselves, but that each one of them is a wellspring of eternal life and a source of holy spirituality.

According to the All-True Gospel of the unique and irreplaceable Savior and Lord: "My words are spirit and life" (John 6: 63), for each one of them pours out from itself saving, sanctifying, grace-filled, life-creating, transfiguring power. Without the holy truth of the Holy Trinity we have none of that power from the Holy Trinity on which we draw by faith and which vivifies sanctifies, deifies, and saves us. Without the holy truth about the God-man, there is no salvation for man, for from it, when it is lived by man, wells forth the saving power which saves from sin, death, the devil.

And this holy truth about the God-man—do not the lives of countless saints most evidently and experimentally bear witness to it? For the saints are saints by the very fact that they constantly live the entire Lord Jesus as the soul of their soul, as the conscience of their conscience, as the mind of their mind, as the being of their being, as the life of their life. And each one of them together with the Holy Apostle loudly proclaims the truth: "Yet not I live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2: 20). Delve into the Lives of the Saints: from all of them wells forth the grace-filled, life-creating, and saving power of the Most Holy Theotokos, Who leads them from *podvig* to *podvig*, from virtue to virtue, from victory over sin to victory over death, from victory over

death to victory over the devil, and leads them up into spiritual joy, beyond which there is no sadness nor sighing nor sorrow,¹ but rather everything is only "joy and peace in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14: 17), joy and peace from the victory obtained over all sins, over all passions, over all deaths, over all evil spirits.

And all this, without a doubt, is the practical and living testimony to the holy dogma concerning the Most Holy Theotokos, truly "more honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim," the holy dogma which the saints by faith carry in their hearts and by which they live with zealous love. Again if you want one, two, or thousands of irrefutable testimonies of the life-bearing and life-creating nature of the All-Venerable Cross of the Lord, and with it an experimental confirmation of the all-truthfulness of the holy dogma of the saving nature of the death of the Savior on the Cross, then start out with faith through the Lives of the Saints. And you will have to feel and see that to each saint individually, and to all the saints together, the power of the Cross is the all-vanquishing weapon with which they conquer all visible and invisible enemies of their salvation. Furthermore, you will behold the Cross in all their being: in their soul, in their heart, in their conscience, in their mind, in their will, and in their body, and in each one of them you will find an inexhaustible wellspring of the saving, all-sanctifying power which unfailingly leads them from perfection to perfection, and from joy to joy, until finally it leads them into the eternal Heavenly Kingdom where there is the unceasing triumph of those who keep

¹cf. *Kontakion* for the departed faithful (Translator's note).

festival and the infinite delight of those who behold the ineffable beauty of the face of the Lord.¹

But not only these aforementioned dogmas are witnessed by the Lives of the Saints, but all the other holy dogmas: of the Church, of grace, of the holy mysteries, of the holy virtues, of man, of sin, of the holy relics, of the holy icons, of life beyond the grave, and of everything else which makes up the Divine-human economy of salvation. Yes, the Lives of the Saints are experimental dogmatics. Yes, the Lives of the Saints are experienced dogmatics, experienced by the holy life of the holy people of God.

In addition, the Lives of the Saints contain in themselves Orthodox ethics in their entirety, Orthodox morality, in the full radiance of its Divine-human sublimity and its immortal life-creating nature. In them is shown and proven in a most convincing manner that the holy mysteries are the source of the holy virtues; that the holy virtues are the fruit of the holy mysteries—they are born of Them, they develop by Their help, they are nourished by Them, they live by Them, they are perfected by Them, they become immortal by Them, they live eternally by Them. All the Divine moral laws have their source in the holy mysteries and are realized in the holy virtues. For this reason the Lives of the Saints are indeed experiential ethics, applied ethics. Actually, the Lives of the Saints prove irrefutably that Ethics is nothing other than Applied Dogmatics. The entire Life of the Saints consists of the holy mysteries and the holy virtues, and the holy mysteries and the

¹cf. First Morning prayer of St. Basil the Great and First Post-Communion Prayer (Translator's note).

holy virtues are gifts of the Holy Spirit Who accomplishes all in all (1 Cor. 12: 4, 6, 11).

And what else are the Lives of the Saints but the only Orthodox pedagogical science. For in them in a countless number of evangelical ways, which are completely worked out by the experience of many centuries, it is shown how the perfect human personality, the completely ideal man, is built up and fashioned, and how with the help of the holy mysteries and the holy virtues in the Church of Christ he grows into "a perfect man, according to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."¹ And this is indeed the educational ideal of the Gospel, the only educational ideal worthy of a being made in the image of God, as man is, and which is established by the Gospel of the Lord Christ, established and realized first by the God-man Christ, and afterwards realized in the Holy Apostles and the other Saints of God. At the same time, without the God-man Christ, and outside the God-man Christ, with any other educational ideal, man forever remains an incomplete being, a wretched being, a miserable being, who deserves all the tears of all eyes in God's worlds.

If you wish, the Lives of the Saints are a sort of Orthodox Encyclopedia. In them can be found everything which is necessary for the soul which hungers and thirsts for eternal righteousness and eternal truth in this life, and which hungers and thirsts for Divine immortality and eternal life. If faith is what you need, there you will find it in abundance: and you will feed your soul with food which will never make it hungry. If you need love, truth, righteousness, hope, meekness, humility,

¹cf. Eph. 4: 13.

repentance, prayer, or whatever virtue or *podvig*, in them, the Lives of the Saints, you will find a countless number of holy teachers for every *podvig* and will obtain grace-filled help for every virtue.

If you are suffering for your faith in Christ, the Lives of the Saints will console you and encourage you and make you bold and give you wings, and your torments will be changed into joy. If you are in any sort of temptation, the Lives of the Saints will help you overcome it both now and forever. If you are in danger from the invisible enemies of salvation, the Lives of the Saints will arm you with the "whole armor of God,"¹ and you will crush them all now and forever and throughout your whole life. If you are in the midst of visible enemies and persecutors of the Church of Christ, the Lives of the Saints will give you the courage and strength of a confessor, and you will fearlessly confess the one true God and Lord in all worlds—Jesus Christ—and you will boldly stand up for the holy truth of His Gospel unto death, unto every death, and you will feel stronger than all deaths, and much more so than all visible enemies of Christ; and being tortured for Christ you will shout for joy, feeling with all your being that your life is in heaven, hidden with Christ in God, wholly above all deaths.²

In the Lives of the Saints are shown numerous but always certain ways of salvation, enlightenment, sanctification, transfiguration, "christification," deification; all the ways are shown by which man conquers sin, every sin; conquers passion, every passion; conquers death,

¹cf. Eph. 6: 11, 13.

²cf. Col. 3: 3.

every death; conquers the devil, every devil. There is a remedy there for every sin: from every passion—healing, from every death—resurrection, from every devil—deliverance; from all evils—salvation. There is no passion, no sin for which the Lives of the Saints do not show how the passion or sin in question is conquered, mortified, and uprooted.

In them it is clearly and obviously demonstrated: There is no spiritual death from which one cannot be resurrected by the Divine power of the risen and ascended Lord Christ; there is no torment, there is no misfortune, there is no misery, there is no suffering which the Lord will not change either gradually or all at once into quiet, compunctionate joy because of faith in Him. And again there are countless soul-stirring examples of how a sinner becomes a righteous man in the Lives of the Saints: how a thief, a fornicator, a drunkard, a sensualist, a murderer, an adulterer becomes a holy man—there are many, many examples of this in the Lives of the Saints; how a selfish, egoistical, unbelieving, atheistic, proud, avaricious, lustful, evil, wicked, depraved, angry, spiteful, quarrelsome, malicious, envious, malevolent, boastful, vainglorious, unmerciful, gluttonous man becomes a man of God—there many, many examples of this in the Lives of the Saints.

By the same token in the Lives of the Saints there are very many marvelous examples of how a youth becomes a holy youth, a maiden becomes a holy maiden, an old man becomes a holy old man, how an old woman becomes a holy old woman, how a child becomes a holy child, how parents become holy parents, how a son becomes a holy son, how a daughter becomes a holy daughter, how a family becomes a holy family, how a community becomes a holy community, how a

priest becomes a holy priest, how a bishop becomes a holy bishop, how a shepherd becomes a holy shepherd, how a peasant becomes a holy peasant, how an emperor becomes a holy emperor, how a cowherd becomes a holy cowherd, how a worker becomes a holy worker, how a judge becomes a holy judge, how a teacher becomes a holy teacher, how an instructor becomes a holy instructor, how a soldier becomes a holy soldier, how an officer becomes a holy officer, how a ruler becomes a holy ruler, how a scribe becomes a holy scribe, how a merchant becomes a holy merchant, how a monk becomes a holy monk, how an architect becomes a holy architect, how a doctor becomes a holy doctor, how a tax collector becomes a holy tax collector, how a pupil becomes a holy pupil, how an artisan becomes a holy artisan, how a philosopher becomes a holy philosopher, how a scientist becomes a holy scientist, how a statesman becomes a holy statesman, how a minister becomes a holy minister, how a poor man becomes a holy poor man, how a rich man becomes a holy rich man, how a slave becomes a holy slave, how a master becomes a holy master, how a married couple becomes a holy married couple, how an author becomes a holy author, how an artist becomes a holy artist. . .

Translated by M. J.

HUMANISTIC AND THEANTHROPIC EDUCATION

The existence of education reveals the fact that man is an imperfect and incomplete being, as has been witnessed and continues to be witnessed from the experience of the human race. All philosophies, all religions, the sciences, and a myriad of civilizations testify to this fact. Man is a being who must be perfected and completed. Therefore, the main purpose of education is to perfect and to complete man. Immediately, however, the following inevitable question arises: With what must man be perfected and with what must he be made complete?

Observed from every side, man is, according to his essence, "open" towards other beings and to other worlds. He is in no way the closed monad of Leibnitz. With all his being, both his natural and psychic self, man weaves together, consciously or subconsciously, willingly or instinctively, the enormous and incomprehensible net of life encompassing the whole world. Education, if it wants to be truly human, must begin from observable facts, as well as from fundamental logical principles. The existence in human history of the search for what is perfect and complete gives birth in our conscience to the passionate question: Who is a perfect and complete human being?

Perhaps Plato? But he, precisely due to his deep knowledge of his own imperfections and shortcomings, was transformed into an arrow of thirst for the worlds above, the worlds of the eternal ideas and ideals. This means that he is not a perfect and complete man.

Perhaps Buddha is perfect? But Buddha being persecuted by monstrous and pitiless feelings of human imperfection, transferred all of his desires for the perfection of the human being to the world beyond—to a world of apathy and insensibility, that is, to Nirvana. Therefore, neither is he the perfect and complete man.

Perhaps Moses? Yet even Moses, persecuted by the horrible calamities of his people and of his own personal weakness, continued to seek help from heaven. Indeed, the bitterness of his humanity is sweetened with prophetic visions about the future coming of the Messiah and the Savior. This means that he also is not a perfect and complete man.

Perhaps Mohammed? But Mohammed, being tortured by his bloodthirsty Hades and by his sensual paradise, runs along this planet realizing through fire and iron his prophetic dreams, trampling with fanatic enthusiasm on the corpses of the "infidels." Therefore, neither is he the perfect and complete man.

Perhaps Kant? But Kant, also tortured with the imperfection and the incompleteness of the human being, transferred whatever is human from the narrow confines of rationalistic decision making and placed it in the abyss of the meta-rationalistic "Das Ding an Sich," leaving himself at the mercy of the unforeseen, of the unknown, and of the dreadful. Therefore, neither is he a perfect and complete man.

Perhaps Shakespeare? He, however, in his insatiable thirst for the perfect and complete, lived a most imper-

fect and incomplete life of unbearable tragedy. He guided man to the worlds above, yet left him along the road amazed and astonished. Consequently, neither is he a perfect and complete man.

Perhaps Goethe? Living, however, the drama of the human being in all the breadth and depth in which Mephistopheles plays the primary role, Goethe, by his pre-death cry "Licht, mehr Licht" clearly had shown how unfortunate was his departure from this world to the world beyond. Therefore, neither was that one a perfect and complete man.

Perhaps Tolstoy? Yet in his continuous and unyielding struggle with imperfection and incompleteness he arrived at such a spiritual restlessness that a short while before his death, in an unbearable agony of the soul, he escaped from his house, with the purpose of escaping from his self, from sorrowful imperfection and his tragically incomplete being. Therefore, neither is he a perfect and complete man.

Perhaps Nietzsche? But, through the volcanic feeling of tragic imperfection and of the unbearable incompleteness of the human being in all the dimensions and realities of this world, as well as through his unbridled longing for the higher and more perfect man, Nietzsche became insane! Therefore, neither is Nietzsche a perfect and complete man.

And so on, from the first to the last man: one sorrowful parade of imperfect and incomplete men. Yet in the middle of them stands That One who had the fullness of mystery, the wondrous God-man: in a divine way perfect and humanly real. His human goodness is divinely perfect and complete; His human love is divinely perfect and complete; so is His righteousness, and His mercy, and His compassion, and His immortali-

ty, and His eternity and His beauty: all are humanly real but also divinely perfect and complete. Nothing is miraculous because He has transformed all things human to divine; He has completed and perfected everything by the divine. In one word, the whole man in Him is divinely perfected and divinely completed.

Do you not believe this? Try to imagine a more perfect God than Christ or a more perfect man than Him. This you will not be able to do because neither the individual nor the collective mind of man can imagine a more perfect God than Christ nor a more perfect man than Him. More importantly, all the divine perfection are humanly real and concrete in Christ. There is not one perfect good or one perfect truth or one perfect beauty which is not incarnate in His Person or realized in His life. On account of all of these, He is precisely the perfect and complete man, the one whom the human race, the human mind, the human heart, has been seeking through a myriad of religions and philosophies, through the sciences, the Arts, and civilization. If we apply this conclusion to education we would say: Christ is that ideal man whom human education seeks as its goal, its meaning, and its ideal. With Him and from Him we know what constitutes the true man. In Him we have the type from which each man can build for himself an ideally good, just, perfect, and complete man. This is possible without great and insuperable difficulties, because in every labor He gives His divine powers in order that one may obtain all His goodness.

You feel that we are already on the main path of the God-human philosophy of education. Pay attention with seriousness and objectivity to the internal structure of this education. The plan, the materials, the program, the soul, and the spirit are all according to the Gospel—they

are all God-human. The values are divine and the methods are centered on the Gospel. God always occupies the first place, man the second. Man lives and thinks, feels, and works for God. This means that man is illuminated by God. Here specifically the question is not about some abstract, super-heavenly God of Plato or Kant, but about a God of concrete earthly reality, humanly concrete of a God who became man and infuses into human categories all that is divine, immortal, and eternal. Therefore, only this one among the human race, namely, the God-man Christ, had the right to seek from men divine perfection ("You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matth. 5: 48)) and to place divine perfection as the goal of life and as the goal of the whole endeavor of man. By doing this, He gives to men at the same time all the necessary means and all the necessary strength with which to realize this goal of obtaining divine perfection.

What are these means? The holy gospel-oriented virtues: faith and love, fasting and prayer, meekness and humility, compassion and goodness, hope and patience, truth and justice. Applying these virtues produces a holy man, namely, a perfect and complete man. Such a man knows the real meaning of the world and of life, and he lives with his whole being directed towards realizing his given purpose in the arena of human activity. Formed by the holy virtues, such a man draws unceasingly from the aorta of his existence all the immortal powers of the everlasting God-man. Thus, already in this life he feels immortal and eternal; for this reason, he sees in every man an immortal and eternal being. The evangelical virtues are the conduits of divine light; each one instills in man a beam of light. As a result of this the saint radiates, illuminates, and enlight-

ens. He carries in himself "The light of the world"; this light illuminates the whole world so that he also might see its eternal meaning and eternal value. The light of the world is simultaneously "the light of life." It illuminates the road which leads to immortality and to eternal life. In our human world light and life are synonymous as are darkness and death.

The saints of the Orthodox Catholic Church of God are proof of what has been said above. Education and training is nothing other than the extension of holiness, the radiance of holiness. The saint sends forth light, and on account of this he enlightens and educates. Education presupposes with all its being holiness. True education is in fact the saint. Without the saints there are no true teachers and educators. Nor is there true education without holiness. Without illumination there is no enlightenment. Holiness is holiness through divine light. True education and enlightenment is nothing other than the radiance of holiness; only the saints are truly illuminated. Holiness lives and breathes by light simultaneously shining and teaching. There is, therefore, an identity common to holiness and illumination.

Truly, then, education signifies illumination—illumination through sanctification in the Holy Spirit who is the vehicle and the creator of holiness and of the light of knowledge. The saints, because they are sanctified and illuminated by the Holy Spirit, are also true teachers and educators.

Education without holiness, namely education without sanctification by the Holy Spirit and without the perfection and the completion of man through the God-man, that is, atheistic education, influenced Europe in its humanistic idolatry. It is immaterial whether or not this idolatry is manifested in the divinization of the Pope or

in the divinization of culture, of science, of civilization, of the arts, of politics, of fashion. Everywhere the main objective is to organize man, society, and the world without God, without Christ. This is also true of education. There, the main objective is to illuminate man and humanity without Christ, God. Towards this direction, humanistic education occupies itself with the creation of the new man. The plan for this new man is simple: Christ or anything of Christ cannot exist in the new man. Europe applied itself to the task and began to create the new man without God, society without God, humanity without God.

The Renaissance had filled many hearts with hope. This was natural since European man had essentially withered on account of the Vatican. Through its illusory scholastic philosophy and its cannibal Jesuitism in ethics, the Vatican had drained the creative, vital powers of European man. Therefore, the renewal of European man with the humanist spirit of ancient Greece was seen as essential in order to prevent his impending death. For this to be realized it was necessary for European man to be carried away from Christ and to sever his every bond with the invisible world.

Rousseau took many things from nature and introduced them to man. The following question quickly arises: What constitutes the nature of man? The senses, answers the empirical philosophy of Locke and Hume. The entire nature of man is derived from the senses and is summarized in the senses. When that which is not essential for man is subtracted from him, only the senses remain to define who he is.

The man who is essentially defined by the senses is very primitive and boorish. For this reason, rationalistic philosophy under the leadership of Descartes and Kant

proposes a new type of man: man as intellect. Man is above all a rational being. Everything else in him is unimportant to the extent that reason is able to claim primacy in his being.

Yet, the volitionists who are lead by Schopenhauer and Styerner, protest that the most important element in man has been omitted. Man's essence cannot be summed up in the senses nor in his reason, since he is neither one of these. Rather, he is foremost comprised of volition. Indeed, they say, man as volition is the true man; he is the new man.

Afterwards, Europe was directed towards the search for the new man among inferior creatures in order to, based on the animal kingdom, create man without God. There was great joy and hysterical shouts were heard when the hypothesis that man originated from the ape and other mammals was put forward. Nietzsche with his storms and earthquakes rushed into the world of the slothful and destructive thought of Europe. With the passion of a prophet and the ardor of a poet he announced to the world his gospel about man. More ardent in his thoughts than in his senses, he extrapolated from the volitionism of Darwin the bold but logical conclusion: If the ape is the transitional link to man, why cannot man be the transitional link to the superhuman. Indeed, man is a being who stands between victory and transgression. "What is the ape to man? He is an object of laughter and disgraceful shame. The same must be true for what man is to the superhuman: laughter and disgraceful shame." The superhuman is the reasoning of the earth and the purpose of history.

What then comprises the superhuman? He is composed of four elements and principles. First of all is his need to kill God. "Oh you superhuman," says Zarathus-

tra, addressing his disciples. "God was the greatest danger for you." But do not be afraid. "God died," Zarathustra proclaims and there is no danger for you anymore, there are no more obstacles for the superhuman. The second element and principle is that one is not to have pity on one's neighbor; whatever happens we must assist it. Thirdly, and most importantly, is the irresponsible and merciless desire for power. Finally, everything is permitted. For the superhuman there is neither good nor evil; he lives beyond good and evil, beyond truth and error, beyond conscience and responsibility.

Here ends the drama of humanism: It has created the new man, the superhuman! From the embryo of Rousseau, the humanistic man developed into the superhuman. But what is the essence of the superhuman? From what material is he created? From an instinct only; from the instinct of self-preservation. If, however, it is not possible for even the smallest insect to be formed from one and only one instinct, how is it possible to have the most complex being on earth formed, that is, man? Here, in the whole animal kingdom where there are more than six hundred thousand species, there is not one mosquito or pre-mosquito which consists of one and only one instinct, even if this is the instinct of self-preservation. In spite of this, Nietzsche proclaimed one single instinct for the superhuman. For this his superhuman is in reality a subhuman, that is, a non-human. If you prefer, the superhuman is the most genius caricature of man found on this darkened planet.

Whatever is valid for the superhuman is also valid for all his humanistic ancestors and descendants. Thus, the natural man of Rousseau is nothing else than a semi-

human because everything that is supernatural has been taken away from him. This semi-human is identical with the sub-human, since in him all the abnormal evils which were nourished and flattered by humanistic education and training have grown unhindered in him.

As for Locke, man is constituted by his senses. One part of man has been proclaimed to be the whole man. Here again we have a sub-human and a new human monster. What are the senses without the soul but a five-string violin without the violinist?

Who is the man of reason for Kant? Once again, a fragment from man is proclaimed as the total man. Where is the world, the infinite world of the human senses and feelings, where one finds both our paradise and hell? Is it possible for man to be a man without them? No, absolutely not. Therefore the Kantian man is simply a caricature of man.

As for the man of volition who belongs to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche what similarity has he with man? Where is the soul with its boundlessness, its conscience, and its compassion? Without all these can man be man? Oh, this too is a caricature of man, a new caricature!

Observe, therefore, the humanistic exhibition of the new man: semi-human next to the semi-human, sub-human next to the sub-human, non-human next to the non-human—that is, a caricature next to another caricature, insignificant men next to insignificant men. Do you not see that European humanistic education has created only shoddy men and with them has populated the whole of Europe? A base little man is the natural man of Rousseau, a shameless man is the man of logic, a paltry man is also the superhuman. Everywhere you find an underdeveloped man, fragments and pieces of man. What you do not find anywhere is a whole and

complete man! We find ourselves present at a tragic exhibition: The European man is without God; he has degenerated on account of his humanistic education and has become a base and insignificant man!

We are in need of a new Prophet Jeremiah and of a new lamentation: The European man has finished his mission and has created a new man without God and without a soul. But can this new man, this superhuman be found? Behold, he does not exist as an individual, rather he exists as a collective power which devastates Europe (and not only Europe) through humanistic education and humanistic culture, through humanistic art and humanistic civilization. Thus, one particular type of European man was created, the Holbachian, namely, *l'homme-machine*, *homo faber*, *homo technicus* (the man-machine, man-maker, technical man). This man is without God and without a soul. In other words, he is a de-divinized and de-spiritualized man-robot. The robot is precisely a robot because it does not recognize God and the soul. Do you know what will be of particular help to him? It will be the so-called psychology without a soul, that is, the European science concerning the soul, the science about the soul which does not recognize the soul! Is there anything more paradoxical? In fact, this paradox happens to be the most inaccessible palace where her divine majesty lives: the European humanistic psychology (*Psychologie ohne seele*). This is the infallible deity that countless robots venerate today.

Here, then, is what was transforming and finally has transformed Europe into a laboratory of robots from the Renaissance up to this day. Indeed, the robot is the most wretched type of man. Whoever has eyes to see let him see: A more miserable, a more ugly, and a more inhuman man than the European robot does not exist on this

planet. May shame and disgrace, eternal shame and eternal disgrace, be upon Europe for its "new man"—a man without God and without a soul, the man-robot.

Since he has killed both God and the soul from within, the European type of man has already gradually been committing suicide for some decades. Suicide is the inevitable outcome of murdering God. Education without God has led Europe and the whole world into a darkness such as humanity has never seen. In this darkness no one knows anyone and no one recognizes anyone as his brother!

What other purpose does education have than to enlighten man, to illuminate all the abysses and the precipices in him, and to expel all darkness from him. If, however, man is without Christ, without God, namely, without this unique inextinguishable light, how will he disperse the gloom of the universe which from all sides attacks him and how will he expel the darkness from within him? With all his lights, but without God, man is nothing other than a firefly in the infinite darkness of the universe. His science and his philosophy, his education and culture, his art and civilization, these are but small candles which he lights in the darkness of earthly and worldly events. What can all these candles do in the endless night of the deep darkness of individual, social, national, and international problems and events? Perhaps, however, these have already been extinguished with the result that a thick and deep darkness of impenetrable gloom has fallen upon Europe and the whole world.

A thoughtless faith in the omnipotence of humanistic science and education, of culture and the applied arts, as well as in the omnipotence of humanistic civilization, borders on insanity. Through the tragic influence of this

thoughtless faith European education has also created among us the confrontation between the Church and the School, or rather, it has exceedingly applied its principles in many Orthodox countries having officially expelled God from School. This has been disastrous for our Orthodox people. Our intellectuals who have been cut off from their roots are already carrying from these centuries "the lights" of this humanism in order to "rehabilitate" the Orthodox people. The result has been to transform Orthodox countries into slaughter-houses of souls. On the altars of the new idolatry the monsters of the apocalypse of European civilization carry out an historically unprecedented slaughter of myriads of human souls at the hands of the intellectual elite through their humanistic education. A. Zint rightly said that Dachau and other concentration camps are the altars which the intellectuals of Europe erected and at which they religiously officiate over their much talked of humanism.

There is only one way to escape final destruction. What is this way? To accept theanthropic education and to apply it completely in all schools, from the greatest to the smallest, and in all state and national educational institutions. Theanthropic education radiates, illuminates, enlightens with the only inextinguishable and true Light in the entire world, namely, with the God-man Christ. Darkness cannot extinguish or hide this Light, not even the darkness of Europe. Only this is capable of expelling all darkness from man, from society, from the people, and from the state. This, the only true Light, illuminates every man into the nucleus of his being and reveals to each one of us our own immortality, our own divine and eternal brother. It teaches us that only then can the problems of man and the problems of society,

the problems of the nation and the problems of humanity, be easily understood and solved when they are examined through the God-man Christ.

The main guidelines and characteristics of theanthropic education can be formulated as follows:

1. Man is a being who can be perfected and completed in the most ideal and real way by the God-man and in the God-man.
2. The perfection of man by the God-man takes place with the help of the evangelical witnesses.
3. The illuminated and educated man sees in every man his immortal and eternal brother.
4. Every human work and action—philosophy, science, geography, art, education, culture, manual labor, etc.—receives its eternal value when it is sanctified and receives meaning from the God-man.
5. True enlightenment and education is accomplished through a holy life according to the gospel of Christ.
6. The saints are the most perfect illuminators and educators; the more holy a man is the better an educator and illuminator he becomes.
7. School is the second half of the heart of the God-man; the first is the Church.
8. At the center of all centers and of all ideas and labors stands the God-man Christ and His theanthropic society, the Church.

THE HIGHEST VALUE AND LAST CRITERION IN ORTHODOXY

When man is awakened from his earthly body and recognizes spiritual realities, he realizes that the things that are of a material nature must indeed be real since it is his intellect that is able to perceive them as such. From here, man arrives at the following paradoxical observation: As a unique creature, man knows the reality of the material world through his intellect, which itself does not share in the attributes of the material realm nor can itself become a material object, neither being shown as a super-subjective reality, nor can it become tangible through the senses. Even though the human intellect is incomprehensible through the forms of material reality, nonetheless, the invisible essence of the intellect constitutes the criterion for all the visible realities in the material realm. Indeed, man often feels and frequently understands that the intellect, even though it is untouchable, invisible, and immaterial, is however, more real than any other super-subjective reality existing in the material world.

Furthermore, all realities have their foundation in the intellect which is itself immaterial. It is precisely here that the supremacy, mystery, and grandeur of the human mind is to be found. The awakened man, guided by his immaterial mind through the mystery of the material, natural world, understands more clearly that

his mind is his greatest and most immediate reality and at the same time is that which is most valuable to him. Existing in such a condition, man senses the irrefutable truth of the words of the Savior that the human soul is the greatest reality and has the greatest worth—a reality more real than the whole visible world and a worth more valuable than the entire universe: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?" (Matt. 16: 26; Mark 8: 36–37). In other words, in the material world there is nothing equal in value to the value of the human soul, nor is there anything by which the soul can be appraised or ransomed. The soul is worth more than the entire universe.

Man lays the foundation for his visible life, for his life in time and space, on the invisible, that is, on the soul, on its thoughts and on its conscience. In the world of visible realities and occurrences, man is oriented by his intellect, and by it he measures and values everything, even though it remains invisible. Yet it is more natural and reasonable for him to be oriented by it in the realm of spiritual realities and values. Not only is man connected by his intellect to the world of visible, material realities, but also to the world of spiritual realities. Even the most extreme sensualists cannot deny this. We must confess that the human mind is a miraculous workplace in which the impressions of the senses are transformed, in an inconceivable manner, into thoughts. The serious observer of the world, from whatever side he approaches material or spiritual realities, is compelled to recognize the infinite mystery contained in all phenomena. This is the tribute that every thinker owes to the enigmatic mystery of the world. Undoubtedly, the proper orientation toward our enigmatic world depends on the

human spirit, or more precisely, on the nature of the spirit by which man is oriented. The human spirit expresses and reveals its nature on account of the experience it receives through its activities. From all this experience the human spirit derives the longing for the infinite in all its manifestations: in knowledge, in life, and in existence.

The human spirit longs for infinite knowledge, infinite life, and infinite existence. Yet through all this, man seeks only one thing: the conquering of the temporal, the finite, the limited and the possibility of securing the eternal, the infinite, and the unlimited. In all cultures and civilizations, the labors of the human spirit are eventually consolidated into one enormous endeavor: to overcome death and mortality and to secure immortality and eternal life in any way possible.

Does not all of this force us to put forward the question: where does the yearning of the human mind and its orientation towards the infinite come from? What is it that prompts human thought from question to question and from infinitude to infinitude? If this longing for the infinite is forced upon the weak man from the outside, how is it, then, that it also exists in the most independently minded of the philosophers? This is so especially, since among them this longing for the infinite is developed into complicated philosophies. All of this proves that the longing for the infinite is found in the nature of the human mind itself. The nature of knowledge tends toward infinite knowledge; the nature of the senses tends toward infinite sensuality; the nature of life itself tends towards infinite life. The entire spirit of man, through his knowledge, senses, will and life, desires to be infinite, that is, to be immortal. The thirst for the infinite, the thirst for immortality is the ancient

metaphysical thirst of the human spirit. This is what has driven the spirit of man towards the infinite through numerous religions, philosophies, sciences, struggle, and strife. In a word: the human spirit longs for immortality, desiring it in whatever way and form.

It is evident that this yearning for the infinite cannot derive from the nature of man, since his nature is itself finite and limited and does not naturally contain this yearning. In the same way, it is evident that the human body has not implanted in man this longing because it too is finite. The only possible explanation is that man's longing for the infinite, for immortality, lies in the essence of the human spirit itself. Being created in the image of God, this longing is found totally in man. The image of God in man is exactly that which longs for the infinite truths of God throughout the entire world. Existing in man's spirit, the divine image propels man toward the infiniteness of God and causes him to yearn after it.

It is only natural that the God-like soul, created according to the divine image, longs after God as its prototype. This discovery is not *a priori*, but beyond doubt *a posteriori*, since the entire experience of the human race testifies to the strong and mystical nostalgia of the human spirit for the infinite, the immortal, the eternal, whether in this world or in the next. If we rely upon the common experience of the human race and sum up man in his fundamental components we will discover this longing for immortality as the most basic element that constitutes man and by which man fulfills his ontological existence.

Creating man according to his image, God diffused into man's very being the longing for the divine infinitude of life, of knowledge, and of perfection. It is pre-

cisely for this reason that the immeasurable longing and thirst of humanity is not able to be completely satisfied by anything or anyone except God. Declaring divine perfection as the main purpose for humanity's existence in the world—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." (Matth. 5: 48)—Christ, the Savior, answered the most elemental demand and need of our God-like and God-longing humanity.

The God-like nature of humanity has its own ontological and teleological significance: ontological, because the essence of the human being is to be found in its divine-like constitution as something which is an undeniable fact; teleological, since by this nature, God, with all His divine perfection, has been defined as the goal of the life of man. This divine likeness is the essence of the human being. Man shapes and builds his life in this world according to this likeness. Indeed, the essence of man is first constituted by God and secondly by man. In other words, man is created by virtue of a divine-human being, who has an obligation, led by his God-like soul, to assimilate everything in him to God and in this way to become a divine-like human being, that is, a being who is united in a perfect way with God and living within the bounds of God's divine and infinite perfection. However, instead of imbuing his empirical life with his God-like soul, he has separated his spirit from all that is divine within him, and proceeds, without God, that is, without his natural guide, into the mysteries of this world. Thus alone in this world, he encounters unbridgeable abysses and frightening chasms.

The fall of man essentially consists in his revolt against the God-like constitution of his being. Man abandoned God and the things of God, and limited

himself to the material world—to a naked and unclad man. With this first revolt against God, man succeeded in expelling God from himself, from his conscience, and from his will, and remained in his pure human nature, in his pure humanity (*homo, hominis*), and in this way, in pure humanism—*horribile dictu*—and it is humanism that is precisely the basic and original evil of man. In the name of autonomous humanism, man expelled God and became a metaphysically superhuman being, remaining completely alone in himself. In spite of this, however, man was not able to completely disassociate himself from the God-like attributes of his spirit; they remained only to reappear under the guise of man's longing for infinite progress, infinite knowledge, infinite perfection, and infinite existence. Consciously or unconsciously, as man labors in his humanism he tends to bring back to himself his lost divine-likeness. In part he is successful: for by necessity he understands that with his pure humanity alone, that is, his humanity without God, he is incapable of correcting his spirit and of restoring his divine-like being. In all his humanistic longings, man is in fact crying out for the God-man.

The appearance in this world, then, of the God-man Christ was natural, rational, and necessary. For only the God-man can completely liberate the tormented human spirit which became sick and godless through humanism. Only He can satisfy every thirst of our God-like human essence: our thirst for infinite life, infinite justice, infinite truth, infinite good, and for the divine infinitude.

The most essential ontological requirements and needs of humanity have been satisfied once and for all in the person of the God-man Christ. In all the requirements and needs of the human spirit related to this world

which are beyond man's grasp, the God-man provides answers as God in a human way, while in all the requirements and needs of the human spirit related to this world which concern man and are under his provenance, the God-man answers as man in a divine way. The God-like possibilities which exist in man's being, and which were enslaved in the tyranny of humanism, the God-man liberates and revitalizes in order for them to regain their immortal fullness. The man who is led by the God-man regulates all that is within him according to God and lives in this enigmatic world by God's commands. Thus he reaches ideal perfection, and he himself constitutes the most perfect composition of the divine and the human, of the spiritual and material, of the present and of the beyond.

The appearance of the God-man Christ in the world of human realities does not constitute something unexpected for human nature, neither ontologically, psychologically, nor historically. On the contrary, this appearance has satisfied the fundamental longings and the essential needs of human existence—the thirst and desire for divine perfection and eternal life. The God-man is not something which is unnatural and nonessential for the human person, but rather he is that which is the most essential of all things, so much so that He Himself, the all True God and Lord Jesus, declares that He is that "one thing which is needful" (Luke 10: 42). Why? This is so because he dissolved the separation between God and humanity in a most perfect, natural, rational, and teleological way. How? He does this by revealing to us in Himself God in a real and physical way, in His absolute truth, absolute goodness, absolute justice, absolute love, and absolute wisdom, who is in perfect unity with man; and He simultaneously reveals

in Himself man in his purity, immortality, and perfection.

The God-man equally reveals God in His perfection and man in his perfection. When we impartially examine the history of the human race, we must confess that there is no greater man than Jesus. This equally means that there is no greater God than Jesus as well. Only Jesus as God-man was and is the greatest man, that is, a man without sin and evil. As the only sinless one, Christ could ask his greatest enemies without fear, "Which of you convicts me of sin?" (John 8: 46). Not one of his accusers could attribute any sin to Him. The man, therefore, who is without sin is the most ideal and most real man since only someone such as this is truly perfect, immortal, and eternal.

Perfect divine wisdom, logic, and intelligence has entered into human nature through the incarnation of the divine Logos. That the Logos was made flesh (John 1: 14) signifies that all the transcendent divine values penetrated and became internally united (that is, they became immanent) within human nature, since they are related to the God-like human soul. All these divine values, enfleshed in man, are in the end united in one inordinate and incomparable value: in the God-man Christ. This is why the God-man has the first, the highest, the most fundamental, and the utmost value for the human world. Nothing is more human than Jesus Christ who personifies in Himself the most ideal perfection of anything human. Further, as the God-man Himself, he is the most perfect unity of the divine and the human, of the present and the beyond, of the natural and the supernatural, of the material and the metaphysical, of the practical and the ideal. In Him, as in the God-man, the equilibrium between the divine and the human

is realized and safeguarded while simultaneously preserving the autonomy of the human and the divine.

There is realized the most radical, rational, and perfect unity of the present life with the life that lies beyond in the divine-human person of Christ. Likewise, there is also found in the person of Christ the unity of the present knowledge and the knowledge of the beyond as well as the unity of human and divine feelings. This means that the life, thought, and feelings of man have bridged the abyss which separates man from God, the abyss between this world and the other. It is for this reason that a man living a life in Christ vividly experiences the unity of this world with the other, the unity of God with man, the worldly with the transcendent, the natural with the supernatural. Man strongly senses and perceives clearly that in him the transition from the mortal to the immortal, the temporal to the eternal, is realized. This perception of eternal life secures the eternity of thoughts and the immortality of feelings for the man who lives a life in Christ.

Although the man who lives in Christ is extended in this way, expanded, engulfed in the divine infinitude, he does not, however, lose his human identity, his personality, nor his character but remains man: a perfect man, human and divine. It is in the God-man Christ that humanity is for the first time raised to the summit of perfection, to the summit above all summits. For no one glorifies human nature or the human person as much as the God-man does. The greatest possible righteousness was given to humanity in the person of the God-man. Humanity was not undervalued in relation to God, nor was God in relation to man. Rather, man was infinitely exalted, elevated, and glorified in relation to God.

Undeniably, the problem of good and evil is one of the most difficult and tormenting problems facing the human conscience. Yet even this problem was finally and effectively solved in the person of the God-man Christ. It was not solved through words, nor theoretically or dialectically, but rather essentially in a divine-human way. In every aspect of his life, the God-man Jesus was revealed as the incarnate one—as the incarnation of the infinite, the most perfect, and absolute good. The keenest eye could not find the most minuscule evil in Him, because "He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips" (1 Peter 2: 22). Human knowledge confronts, in the person of the God-man Christ, the absolute divine good and acknowledges through Him, even in the limits of human existence, what is good and what is evil, just as the human heart through Him is able to sense good and evil in a concrete way. The good, the eternal good, is whatever Christ is in His divine-human reality, that is the entire divine man. Being sinless and omnipotent, the Lord Jesus Christ gave to human nature the divine energies of grace in order for the grace of human nature to grow to perfection in the divine good and to completely defeat sin and evil. It is for this reason that the God-man Jesus is the most valuable person throughout the entire cosmos in which human thought and feelings operate.

Throughout his entire history, man appears as a unique type of creature who has laboriously sought the fundamental and essential truth upon which the foundation of the cosmos rests. Man has attempted to answer the quest for truth in various ways—mythologically, philosophically, atheistically, spiritually, and materialistically. However, he has not been able to solve the problem since he has tried to solve it with the categories

of pure, autonomous, and atheistic humanism. Only in the miraculous person of the God-man Christ is the entire eternal Truth revealed, without any defects. Further, the search for eternal truth is completed in the revelation of the absolute divine Truth within the boundaries of human nature. Thus, from the mouth of the God-man Christ came the most courageous declaration that a human being could possibly give: "I am the Truth" (John 14: 6). This means that the God-man Christ, as a person, is the truth in all His theanthropic perfection and reality.

The one act which makes the God-man Christ, in particular, the most valuable of all beings is that He is the first and only to have completely and effectively resolved the age-old dilemma of life and death. He has done this by revealing in His God-man person, the incarnate one, immortality and eternal life. This is especially demonstrated by His Resurrection and Ascension to the eternal life of the divine One. The entire theanthropic life of Christ both before and after His resurrection is evident proof that He is the personification of immortality and eternal life and therefore the master over death. By His Resurrection He insured for human nature victory over death, and by His Ascension immortal life in the eternity of the Triune God. For this reason, he alone among the human race is justified in saying: "I am the Resurrection and the life" (John 11: 25). He is the resurrection and the life in His God-human character on account of His sinlessness. Where there is no sin there is no death, since only sin creates death. As sin is the only cause of death, thus sinlessness, namely perfect holiness, is the only cause of immortality.

The mystery of the world and that of man are brought together in the human conscience. The entire

creation is covered by an opaque darkness which human reason is incapable of penetrating to its fundamental meaning in order to comprehend why the world exists in its present state and form. Only by being illuminated with the light of the God-man Christ does the world open the blossom of its essence to us and thus reveals its true meaning and value. That is why the Savior said: "I am the light of the world" (John 8: 12; 9: 5). In the God-man Christ and through His light man for the first time opened his eyes and saw the light while comprehending the true meaning of the world.

There is a certain amount of divine wisdom and purpose that is diffused throughout the entire creation. It is dispersed by Christ Himself, by the eternal Logos of God, and for this reason it is said in the Holy Gospel: "All things were made by Him" (John 1: 3). The reasonableness (*logosnost*) and wisdom in this world, and in the entire creation, is made evident in the light of the incarnate Logos of God. The human mind (*logos*), only when illuminated by the light of the incarnate God, is capable of comprehending the divine-rational (*logosni*) meaning of creation, that is, the meaning of the divine Logos in creation, as one is persuaded in this way through the truth of the words of the Apostle: "For all things were created through Christ and in Him" (Col. 1: 16). Thus, every created being individually and the entire created world collectively ought to realize in themselves the truth and justice of the God-man Christ up to their utmost potential. Heaven and earth will not pass away until the law of divine Logos has been fulfilled in all things (cf. Matth. 5: 18). It was in the God-man that the cleansing, renewal, and restoration of creation began—since creation had become ill and had

been transformed into chaos due to the presence and power of human sin and evil (cf. Rom. 8: 19–23).

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Christ, as the divine-human Person, is the most valuable of all beings and as such he is at the same time the highest criterion of all true values. In this world any being inferior to the God-man cannot become the criterion of all values because that which is of the greatest value is none other than the Person of the God-man himself. Man cannot be the criterion since his value is much less than that of the God-man. The God-man constitutes the highest criterion of anything divine or human both in this world and the next simply because he is the most valuable of all beings. History does not know a greater God than Christ, nor a greater man than Christ. The God-man has revealed both simultaneously and completely God and man. Therefore, there is no God without the God-man and there is no man without the God-man.

"What is truth?" inquired Pilate of the incarnate Truth, wanting to hear with his own ears that which he did not perceive with his eyes, as though it was not the same soul that was hearing through his ears and seeing through his eyes. The God-man Christ is the Truth, not as word, neither as teaching nor as concrete energy, but as a most perfect and eternally living divine-human Hypostasis. It is only as a theanthropic Personality that He is the criterion of truth. It is for this reason that the God-man not only said "I am the Truth," but also that, "I am the Way" (John 14: 6), that is, He is the way to Truth itself, the criterion of Truth itself, the essence of Truth itself. The criterion of Truth is the Truth itself, and

the Truth is the God-man Christ. Thus, whatever does not come from Him is not from the Truth. The Truth cannot ontologically exist outside of His divine-human personality.

In Christianity truth is not a philosophical concept, nor is it a theory, a teaching, or a system, but rather, it is the living theanthropic hypostasis—the historical Jesus Christ (John 14: 6). Before Christ men could only conjecture about the Truth since they did not possess it. With Christ as the incarnate divine Logos the eternally complete divine Truth enters into the world. For this reason the Gospel says: "Truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1: 17).

What is life, real true life, and what is the criterion of life? It is none other than the Person of the God-man Christ. It is the Person and not merely his teachings separated from his miraculous and life-giving Person. On account of humanity's inescapable mortality no man has ever dared to say: I am the life. The God-man, however, said: "I am the Life" (John 14: 6). He said this justifiably since he conquered death by his resurrection and showed himself to be eternally alive by his Ascension and through him being placed at the right hand of the Father. For this reason the God-man is also the Life and the criterion of Life. Whatever does not come from Him is dead. In Him life finds its rationality (*logosnost*) and its reasonableness because it finds its divine eternity. As the eternal divine Logos He is both life and all-life (*svezivot*, cf. John 1: 4) since life is only life through Him. Wherever one does not find Him, there one will find life transformed into death, because it is He alone who makes life really life. Rebellion from Him who is life always ends in mortality and death. It is for this reason that only in Him, as the Logos and the Reason of

life, can one find the only possible rational justification for the existence of life in the category of time and space.

Eternal life is nourished and preserved through the eternal good, justice, truth, wisdom, and light. When the Savior proclaimed: "I am the Life," He was also proclaiming the following: I am the Good, I am the Justice, I am the Truth, I am the Wisdom, I am the Light. Since then, He is all of these simultaneously; He is also the highest criterion of all of these. By his most perfect personality, the sinless God-man constitutes for the human race the only infallible criterion of life, goodness, justice, truth, wisdom, and light. The God-man is the highest and most perfect being, the only eternal being and therefore the highest and most perfect criterion, the only eternal criterion, of truth, life, justice, light, goodness, and wisdom.

* * *

Christ sums up all of His teaching and work in His theanthropic person and interprets them through Him. On account of this, the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Christ sums up all of Christianity in the life-giving person of the God-man Christ: instruction, truth, justice, goodness, and life. The Person of the God-man Christ is the Church's most valuable treasure. All other treasures, the Orthodox Church receives as rays of the sun, from the unique Sun, Christ.

We must not be mistaken: Christianity is Christianity only on account of the God-man; in this lies its extraordinary meaning, value, and power. The God-man Christ, the theanthropic personality, remains with us as the Church. The Church is the Church only through the

God-man and in the God-man. The New Testament can be summed up in one, this one comprehensive truth: the God-man is the essence, the purpose, the meaning, and the essential value of the Church. He is its soul, its heart, and its life. He is the Church in its entire theanthropic fullness. The Church is nothing other than the God-man Christ projected through all the centuries: "And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matth. 28: 20; cf. Eph. 1: 21-23).

The God-man is the head of the body of the Church (Col. 1: 18; Eph. 1: 22, 5: 23). As such He is also the Savior of the body of the Church (Eph. 5: 23). It is only through Him, the unique, and undivided God-man, that the Church remains one, unique and undivided. As the God-man, He holds together the whole body of the Church in one undivided unity of grace, truth, and life. Through Him the body of the Church grows and receives all aspects of divine life. The body of the Church grows according to the measure of the stature of the theanthropic fullness of Christ, since everything has been made through Him and in Him (Eph. 4: 13, 15-16; Col. 1: 10, 16). With the power of His grace He mystically ("sacramentally") leads all the members of the Church to the theanthropic creator since the meaning and purpose of the Church is for everyone to be led by divine-human faith to the measure of the fullness of Christ, namely to be refashioned theanthropically.

The Church through its Apostles, martyrs, confessors, holy Fathers, and its faithful members has, more than any other thing, unhesitatingly confessed and defended the God-human Hypostasis. The Church, while showing great mercy towards sinners, has always implacably and decisively condemned and rejected those who, in whatever way, have denied, rejected, or disfigured the

divinity and humanity of Christ. The Church is forever eager to joyfully walk towards apocalyptic martyrdom in order to defend and preserve the theanthropic Person of Christ.

What is the essence of Orthodoxy? It is the God-man Christ. Everything that is Orthodox has a divine-human character: knowledge, the senses, the will, the mind, morality, dogma, philosophy, and life. divine humanity is the only category in which all the manifestations of Orthodoxy are received and fully operate. In all of creation, God occupies the first place, man the second. God leads while man is led; God acts and man cooperates. God does not act transcendently. He is not the abstract God of deism, but rather the God of the most immediate historic reality, the God of revelation, the God who became man and lived within the categories of our human existence while appearing everywhere as absolute holiness, goodness, wisdom, justice, and truth.

As the perfect God-man, nothing within the categories of human life remain unknown (cf. John 2: 25; Heb. 2: 14, 17-18). It is precisely for this reason that He became man, although remaining God, in order to give to human nature divine power which would lead humanity to an intimate, divine-human, union with God. This divine power continuously acts within His divine-human body, that is, the Church, by uniting men with God through a holy life in grace. The Church is nothing other than that wondrous divine-human organism where, through cooperation of divine grace and the free activity of man, the entire man and everything that is human, save sin, is immortalized and refashioned in a divine-human way.

In the divine-human organism of the Church each believer constitutes a dynamic constituent cell of the

organism and lives by the life-giving, divine-human power of Christ. For someone to be a member of the Church, this signifies that he is incorporated into the God-human Christ and has become united into His one body (Eph. 3: 16) as an organic member of His divine-human body (Eph. 5: 30; 1 Cor. 12: 12-13). In a word, the member of the Church becomes divinely-human in the fullness of his human personality. When he has succeeded in this, man arrives at the divine-human unity of life and experiences the living and immortal realization that he has passed from death to life (John 5: 24; 3: 36; 11: 25-26). He continuously experiences throughout his entire being that the Church, a divine-human organism, is the God-man extended into the ages. Christ, as a divine-human person, is unparalleled, but as theanthropic power and life he continuously reappears in every Christian, since every Christian is an organic member of His divine-human body, the Church.

Identifying the Church as the body of Christ (Eph. 1: 23; Col. 1: 24), the holy Apostle connects the Church's being with the mystery of the incarnation of the divine Logos and demonstrates that the living and changeless foundation of the historical nature of the Church lies precisely in the reality that the Logos became flesh.¹ In addition, the Apostle demonstrates that the Church, because she is the body of Christ, constantly depends upon the incarnate divine Logos for her essential being. The Church receives her immeasurable fullness of divine-human grace and power from Christ who fulfills all things that belong to the Church through Him (cf. Eph. 1: 23; Col. 2: 9).

¹John 1: 14; G. Florovsky, *Ocevo Dom*, "Hriscanski Zivot," 1926, p. 166.

Both the Church's ontological existence and all her activity depend completely upon the incarnate God since the Church as a whole is founded on the historic reality of the Gospel: "The Logos became flesh," that is, became God-man. This is the fundamental truth of the Church, the foundation of the Church. The Church, being for all and in all, is foremost a God-human organism and then a God-human institution.

The whole nature of the Church, in all its manifestations, has a divine-human character. It is from this nature that the Church also derives, in a rational way, her divine-human activity in the world through which she imparts to humanity all things related to God. The mission of the Church is to be found in the nature of the Church and it is here where humanity participates in all the divine-human values and energies. The incarnation of God is the final and perfect revelation of God to a being such as man. Having been made man and not some other kind of being, God demonstrated that the God-man is the nature of man's nature, the logic of man's logic, the goodness of man's goodness, the truth of man's truth; in a word, the essence, the meaning, and the purpose of the God-like soul of man. Therefore, as the Church confesses the God-man, she simultaneously confesses the genuine, true, and complete divine-like man. Except for the God-man there is no genuinely true man.

How does the Orthodox Church preserve her greatest treasure, that is, the All-holy Person of the God-man Christ? She safeguards Him through her one and unique, holy, catholic, and apostolic faith. Through the unity of her faith, the Orthodox Church preserves through the centuries the unity and uniqueness of divine-human life and truth; through her holiness she

preserves the unique holiness of life and truth in her divine-human body; through her catholicity she preserves the catholicity and wholeness of divine-human life and truth; through her apostolicity she preserves the unchangeable and continuous historical reality and life of the divine-human body and work of Christ.

According to the Apostle Paul, it is only "with all the saints" (Eph. 3: 18) that one can fully understand the mystery of the Person of Christ and can truly and correctly believe in the God-man Christ. Only living "with all the saints" in the catholic unity of the faith can one be a true Christian, a genuine disciple of the God-man Christ. Indeed, the Church's life is always catholic and is realized in communion "with all the saints." The true member of the Church actively experiences the realization that he is of the same faith as that of the Apostles, the Martyrs, and all the Saints throughout the centuries. He senses that they are eternally present and that all of them are permeated with one and the same theanthropic power and energy, one and the same theanthropic life, one and the same theanthropic truth. There is no catholicity outside the Church. Only the true and genuine life of the Church creates in man the feeling of the wholeness of faith, truth, and life, that is, to live "with all the Saints" with all the members of the Church throughout the centuries.

It is impossible for someone to acquire a catholic knowledge of the spirit except by being incorporated into the life of the Church. The entire significance of the perseverance of Orthodoxy through the centuries lies exactly in the numerical identity of the Church, in her uniquely catholic, universal, and continuous existence, with an uninterrupted and continuous hierarchical succession, with the performance of the mysteries, with

the communion of the faith, and by the action of the One Spirit and one grace in all of these. This is none other than the unity of the body of Christ, the unity of the house of God, in which all who have fallen asleep in faith and piety presently live and dwell along with all the saints and holy fathers. Each priest, when he celebrates the divine Liturgy, not only repeats the words which St. Basil the Great or St. John Chrysostom had once offered themselves before the holy altar, but, in a real, though incomprehensible, communion he concelebrates with them before God. In every divine service the entire Church is invisibly present, as the true "one flock, offering common and unanimous prayers and thanksgivings to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Father. This is not a psychological or subjective connection with the past, but the ontological unity of life. In the Church time comes to a standstill, because here there is no death, and the interruption of earthly life suspends the living relationship of the generation.¹

In the Church, the past is contemporary; and that which is present remains so on account of the living past, since the God-man Christ who is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13: 8), continuously lives in His divine-human body by means of the same truth, the same holiness, the same goodness, the same life and establishes the past in the present. Thus, to a living Orthodox understanding and conscience, all the members of the Church, from the Holy Apostles to those who have recently fallen asleep, are contemporary since they continuously live in Christ. Further, today in every true Orthodox individual one can find all the Holy

¹G. Florovsky, *ibid.*, 1925, p. 358.

Apostles, Martyrs, and holy Fathers. For the Orthodox Christian these are more real than many of his contemporaries.

This sense of the catholic unity of faith, life, and knowledge constitutes the essence of the Church's ecclesial reality. It is this understanding that reveals the truth of the God-man's unceasing, life-giving power, which is revealed unremittingly in the divine-human life of the Church by the unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the Church's faith, life, and truth. For what does it mean for someone to profess to be Orthodox? It means this: to be part of the continuous struggle that leads from man to God-man, that is, to be involved in the unending improvement of oneself through the theanthropic mysteries, struggles, and virtues. Here the Orthodox Christian is never alone. Every feeling, act, and thought is both individual and universal, not merely personal and catholic but theanthropic.

When an Orthodox Christian ponders something, he does so prayerfully, with fear and trembling, since he knows that the choir of angels and the entire church participate mystically with him in his struggle. The Orthodox Christian does not belong only to himself, but to all the saints and, through them, to the holy Lord Jesus. When he examines his own spirit, the Orthodox Christian reflects: my spirit is nothing unless it is filled and perfected by the Holy Spirit.¹

¹In one of his epistles, dated Jan. 21, 1965, Fr. Justin writes, "The holy mystery of the day of the Holy Spirit, Pentecost, is to be understood in the following manner: the spirit of man must be completed and perfected by the Holy Spirit, that is, it must be sanctified, illuminated, and divinized by the Holy Spirit. This holy mystery is realized continually in the Church of Christ and because

In the life and soul of an Orthodox Christian nothing takes place according to man's desire or will but everything occurs according to the God-man. Through the exercise of evangelical virtues, the Orthodox Christian concentrates on God—his spirit, soul and will concentrate through the aid of the Holy Spirit. Whatever belongs to him is gathered and universalized (*sabornizirase*) in the God-man. With his entire being he understands that the Orthodox Church is always holy and catholic and that the attribute of divine humanity is the unaltered characteristic of the Orthodox Church.

Orthodox Christians are Orthodox because they maintain a continuous sense of divine-human catholicity which they preserve and kindle through prayer and humility. They never preach about themselves; they never boast; they never remain entirely within their base human nature; they never idealize humanism. The holy Christ-bearing Apostles once and for all gave the definition of the ecclesial dimension of divine humanity: "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15: 28). First, the Holy Spirit, and then, us; "us" in as much as we allow the Holy Spirit to act through us.

Included in this theanthropic apostolic definition is the entire method by which the Church carries out her divine-human activity in the world. The holy martyrs and confessors, the holy Fathers and Ecumenical Synods accepted and continued this method. If someone departs from this method he departs from the Holy Spirit as well as the holy Apostles, martyrs, fathers, and Oecu-

of this the Church is really a continuous Pentecost.... From Holy Pentecost, the day of the Holy Spirit, every God-like soul in the Church of Christ is an incombustible bush which continuously burns and is inflamed with God and has a fiery tongue within it.

menical Synods. Further, he deviates from the unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the theanthropic faith of Christ, that is, he is cut off from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Orthodox Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic because it does not deviate from this sacred method. The Church is Orthodox because it continuously confesses, maintains, and safeguards not only the theanthropic, apostolic-catholic, ecumenical truth of Christianity but also the theanthropic, apostolic-catholic, ecumenical methodology of Christianity. The Lord Jesus is both the Truth and the Way. If one departs from the theanthropic methodology, one cannot also avoid deviating away from the theanthropic truth and the God-man Christ.

The Orthodox Church contains the complete teaching of the God-man Christ precisely because it does not deviate from the theanthropic methodology of the holy Apostles and the Oecumenical Synods. The believing individual of the Orthodox, apostolic, and patristic faith both senses and understands that they are co-workers of the Holy Spirit only, and as such they constantly listen, through prayer, to what the Spirit says, do what the Spirit asks of them, and continually examine their own thoughts and words by the Spirit. Since the catholic unity of the theanthropic Truth is always present in the catholic conscience of the Orthodox Church, the holy Fathers and Teachers continuously participate in the theanthropic life of the Church through the charismatic action of the Holy Spirit. This is reflected in an encyclical issued by Orthodox Patriarchs a few centuries ago: "We believe that the Holy Spirit instructs the Catholic Church... The Church is most certainly instructed by the life-sustaining Spirit through the holy Fathers and Teachers... We confess that it is impossible for the

Catholic Church to err or to be completely mistaken or to choose falsehood instead of truth. The All-holy Spirit, acting through faithfully serving holy Fathers and spiritual guides delivers the Church from any kind of error.¹

* * *

In the European West, Christianity gradually became transformed into humanism. For several centuries the God-man became more and more limited and confined to His humanity, eventually becoming the infallible man of Rome and of Berlin. Thus, on the one hand there appeared a western Christian humanistic maximalism (the papacy) which took everything away from Christ, and on the other hand a western Christian humanistic minimalism (Protestantism) which sought very little if anything from Christ. In both man takes the place of the God-man as that which is of most value and is the measure of all things. Thus, a most grievous correction of the God-man, His work, and His teaching was accomplished!

The Papacy persistently and continuously tried to replace the God-man with man, until finally when the dogma of the infallibility of man supplanted the God-man with an infallible man. With this dogma, man (the Pope) was proclaimed decisively and clearly to be something not only greater than man, but greater than the holy Apostles, the holy Fathers, and the Oecumenical Synods. With this rebellion against the God-man

¹Dositheos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, *Confession of Faith, Article 12*, in: John Karmires, *The Dogmatic and Symbolic Documents of the Orthodox Catholic Church*, vol. 2, p. 755, Athens, 1953.

and the catholic-ecumenical Church, papal maximalism surpassed even Luther himself, the founder of Protestant minimalism. Indeed, the first fundamental protest against the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church is to be found in the Papacy and not in Lutheranism. Yet it is precisely in this protest that one finds the origins of Protestantism.

We must not be mistaken. Western Christian humanistic maximalism, i.e., the Papacy, is fundamentally Protestantism since it removed the foundation of Christianity from the eternal God-man and placed it in finite man claiming this to be the measure and criterion of all. Protestantism did nothing more than to simply accept this dogma and to develop it to a point where it has reached horrendous proportions and particulars. Truly, then, Protestantism is nothing other than an abstract papism being applied to everything, that is, the basic principle of the infallibility of one man has been applied to every individual human being. According to the example of the infallible man of Rome, every Protestant becomes infallible since he claims personal infallibility in matters of faith. From this it can be said that Protestantism is a popularized papism lacking however a mystical dimension, authority, and power.

Christianity, with all its infinite theanthropic truths, was confined in the West to the human individual with the result that western Christianity was transformed into humanism. This may seem paradoxical but it is true. The historical reality of this is shown in an indisputable way. In its essence, western Christianity is fundamentally humanistic since it has declared man infallible, thus transforming the theanthropic religion into a humanistic one. Proof of this is found in the fact that the Roman Church transported the God-man back to heaven and in

His place put a substitute: *Vicarius Christi*... What a tragic absurdity: to appoint a substitute and representative for the all-present Lord and God! It is, however, a fact that this absurdity was realized in western Christianity.

Thus, the de-incarnation of the incarnate God, the de-incarnation of the God-man, was somehow accomplished. Western Christian humanism proclaimed that the all-present God-man was not present in Rome and thus appointed His substitute in the person of an infallible man. It is as if this humanism were saying to the God-man: Depart from this world and go to the next since we have your representative who infallibly represents you in everything.

The replacement of the God-man with a human person is reflected in the replacement of a Christian theanthropic methodology by a human one. From this replacement has emerged the primacy of Aristotelian philosophy in Scholasticism, the causative method and the holy inquisition in morality, papal diplomacy in the international arena, the papal state, forgiveness of sins through both indulgences and the radio and finally the Jesuit movement in its various forms.

All this leads to the following conclusion: Humanistic Christianity constitutes the most decisive protest against the God-man and His role as the criterion of all things. Certainly, one also finds here the appearance of the tendency of European man to view humanity as the sum of all things as well as the basic value and fundamental measure of all things. Behind this there stands an idol: *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (human, very human).

In the act of reducing Christianity to humanism, Christianity itself has been simplified. At the same time,

however, it has also been destroyed. However, since there has been a reemergence of Christianity with humanism today, people are considering replacing humanistic Christianity with ancient polytheistic religion. The voices of some people in the Protestant world crying, "*Zurück zu Jesus! Back to Jesus!*" constitute weak cries in the moonless night of humanistic Christianity. It is this Christianity which has abandoned theanthropic values and criteria and is presently drowning in desperation and stalemate while from the depths of the centuries echo the harsh words of the bereaved prophet of God, Jeremiah: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man" (Jer. 17: 5).

In broad historical perspective, western dogma concerning the infallibility of humanity is nothing other than an effort to revitalize and perpetuate a dying European humanism. This is the last transformation (*transformatio*) and final glorification (*glorificatio*) of humanism. After the rationalistic enlightenment of the eighteenth century and the myopic positivism of the nineteenth, nothing else remains within European humanism except for its decomposition into contradiction and passivity. At this tragic moment religious humanism appeared with the dogma of the infallibility of man and saved European humanism from immanent death. Yet even with its extreme dogmatic tendencies, western Christian humanism could not contain within itself all the deadly contradictions of European humanism which converge in one wish: that the God-man be removed from earth to heaven. This is so since the fundamental tenet of humanism is that man is to become the most valuable being and the measure of all things.

* * *

In the end, Christianity is Christianity precisely because of the God-man, His divine-human truth, and the theanthropic way of life that Christianity offers. This is the fundamental truth against which no compromises can be made. The entire Christian understanding of what is valuable and worthy is defined and determined by this. Christ, as the God-man, is the most valuable being and the infallible measure of all things. We, therefore, must be sincere and consistent to the end. If Christ is not both God and man, then He becomes the most audaciously self-proclaimed being since he declares himself to be God and Lord. Yet the evangelical historical reality demonstrates and proves unconditionally that Jesus Christ is fully and completely the perfect God-man. No one can be a Christian without believing in the God-man and in his theanthropic body, the Church, in which Christ has entirely deposited his wondrous personality. The saving and life-giving power of the Church of Christ lies in the eternally alive and ever-present Person of the God-man. Any attempt to replace the God-man with a man or to chose only those elements of Christianity which satisfy one's "personal taste" or one's individual understanding changes Christianity into a superficial and weak humanism. Everything under the sun is old except for the Personality of the God-man Christ. He is the only being that is new; he is eternally new.¹ This is what makes the New Testament new and the truth of the gospel always new and eternal. Since the personality of the God-man is eternally new and youthful in its theanthropic perfec-

¹Cf. John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 1. P.G. 94, 984B: "And being perfect God, he becomes perfect man; and thus occurs the newest event of all that is new, the only new thing under the sun."

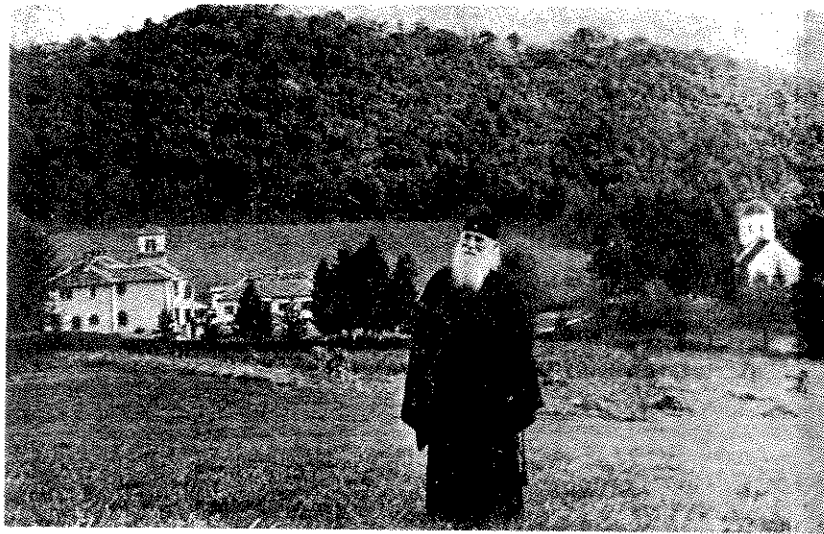
tion, it cannot be exchanged or replaced; it is always and consistently the same. Therefore, the Gospel is always and everywhere the same: for those who live on earth as well as for the angels in heaven. The God-man Christ is the unique Logos, the unique mind, the unique meaning of both man and creation. Without Him it is impossible for even the smallest ordeal to be accepted in the world or in a human being like us.

From a purely ontological point of view, the God-man is not a miracle but rather a necessity for a world and a humanity such as ours. For this reason the Holy Gospel says that the divine Logos, being incarnate, "came unto His own" (John 1: 11). What is it, then, that makes humanity one of His "own", if it is not the human being's God-like soul? Again it is said, "For we are His offspring" (Acts 17: 28). Once again we are identified with Him on account of our God-like soul. Elsewhere the Gospel tells us that the divine Logos is, "the true light that enlightens every man who comes into the world" (John 1: 9). Therefore, when He became incarnate, He came not to strangers but to his own. In proclaiming the God-man we confess our Christ-like humanity, the divine origin of man, the divine grandeur of man as well as the divine value and sacredness of the human person. If this is not how things are, then for what reason are we "like" the divine Logos and "offspring" of God? In essence, the struggle for the God-man is a struggle for humanity. It is not the humanist who is fighting for the true man, the divine-like and Christ-like man, but rather men of theanthropic faith and life.

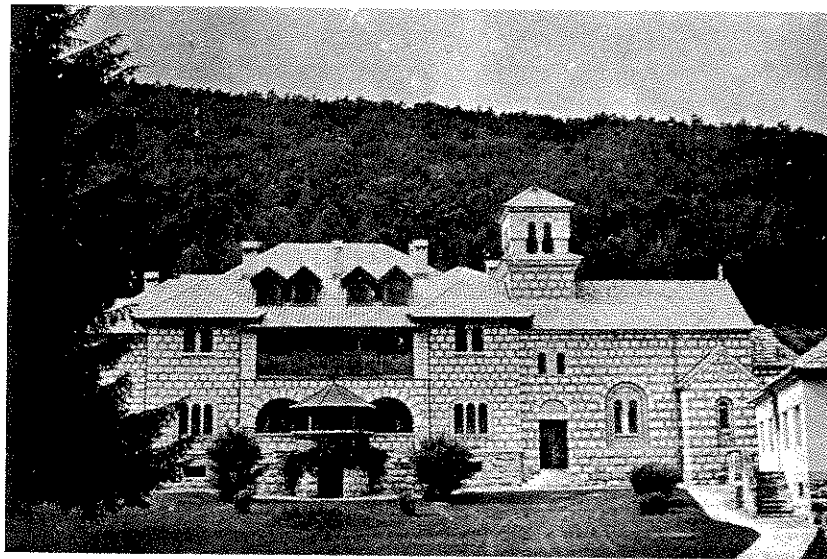
The exceptional importance of Christianity for the human race lies in the life-giving and unalterable divinity and humanity of Christ. It is this divine-human

Christ who gives meaning to everything human and transforms the worthlessness of non-being into the light of all-being. It is only through its divine-human power that Christianity is the "salt" of the earth, a salt which preserves humanity from decomposing into sin and evil. If, however, Christianity becomes decomposed into various humanistic elements, then it becomes lifeless, it becomes a "saltless" salt, which, according to the ever-true word of the Savior, "is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men" (Matth. 5: 13). Every effort and attempt to normalize (*gleichschalten*) Christianity with the spirit of the age, with the fleeting movements of various historical epochs or with political regimes only removes that distinctive characteristic from Christianity which makes it the unique theanthropic religion in the world.

Not conforming the God-man Christ to the spirit of the age but rather conforming and adjusting the spirit of the age to the spirit of the eternity of Christ, to the divine humanity of Christ—this is the unique and true mission of the Church of Christ in the world, of the Apostolic and Orthodox Church. Only in this way will the Church be able to preserve the life-giving and irreplaceable Personality of the God-man Christ, which is in Itself the most valuable being in all the universe, in the visible and invisible worlds as well as the world to come. He is that which is of the highest value and the infallible measure of all.



St. Justin overlooking the fields and dales
of Chelie Monastery.



General view of Chelie Monastery in Fr. Justin's time.

REFLECTIONS ON THE INFALLIBILITY OF EUROPEAN MAN

1. *A*fter God, man is, without a doubt, the most mysterious and enigmatic entity in all the realms of human thought. At the bottomless depth of human existence there whirl contradictions which defy reconciliation: life and death, virtue and evil, God and devil, and all that exists in and around them. Through all its religions, philosophies, sciences, spiritual and materialistic civilizations, the human race has been trying to solve essentially one problem, one all-encompassing problem: the problem of man. And from all these exertions and struggles it has fashioned for itself one supreme godhead, to be worshipped as the highest value and the foremost criterion. That ultimate godhead is "Man is the measure of everything." That is to say, man is the measure of all being and of all things. However, through this method—his own Divine majesty—man has failed to solve the problem of man. In measuring himself by himself he has failed to understand either himself or the world around him (cf. 2 Cor. 10: 12). He has labored in vain. He has mirrored a reflection in a looking-glass. And he has summed up everything in the agonized cry and the trembling confession: "By myself I know nothing" (1 Cor. 4: 4). "I know nothing by myself. I don't know what is man, nor what is God, nor what is death, nor what is life. And I

feel with all my being that I am a slave to death, a slave to evil, and through my sins a slave to the devil." The yield of all this human exertion has been to weave a body out of all the human race: "the body of death," of which every man has become a part. And what is hidden within this body of death?—stench, putrefaction, maggots. "Wretch that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7: 24).

No one, no one save the God-man because the God-man Christ triumphed over death by His Resurrection. He destroyed "the body of death" as an ontological reality (cf. Rev. 20: 14, 10). He redeemed the human race from death and granted the gift of eternal Life, eternal Truth, eternal Love, eternal Justice, eternal Joy, and all the other eternal Divine Virtues which can only be granted by the God of Love, the Lover of Mankind. And so He solved the problem of man, the entire problem of mankind. When God became man, he appeared as the God-man, and through his body—the Church—he has remained as God-man in this terrestrial world. He has become the ultimate value and the supreme criterion of the human race forever—the only True God and the only True Man, the only Perfect God and the only Perfect Man. As such He is the only supreme value and the only ultimate criterion of man's spiritual and physical being, of his theanthropic potential, and of all that is human and of man. Only in the God-man has man seen himself complete and eternal for the first time. He has recognized himself in all his dimensions. As a result a new general principal of value and knowledge applies to the human race: "The God-man is the measure of everything." Nevertheless, "man is the measure of everything" continues to reign, to dominate for the most part, in the idolatrous and

polytheistic non-Christian world *ferro ignique*. This led the Apostle Paul, the divinely enlightened student of man, and the God-man to summarize all the philosophies of the human race in two: the philosophy according to man, and the philosophy according to the God-man (Col. 2: 8).

2. Only the God-man is perfect, truly perfect Man, and simultaneously perfect God and perfect Man. Here the Hypostasis of God's Logos is the critical consideration. It was clearly interpreted and proclaimed by the divinely-inspired, saintly, God-bearing Fathers of the Fourth Oecumenical Synod at Chalcedon. In the God-man Christ, man has reached his ultimate perfection. Through God his soul has been perfected and made complete, along with his conscience, his will, his mind, his heart, and his body; in a word, his entire being. And the most important of all miracles, truly worthy of our love, occurred: the God-man remained in this terrestrial world and in the entire universe as his Church, as His Body, so that every individual can join the fellowship of the body of the God-man and in this way achieve his full and complete perfection (cf. Eph. 3: 6). Only in the God-man and through the God-man can each human individual become truly human, completely human. Only with the God-man and his Church, and through his Church "with all the Saints," is it possible to achieve "complete personhood, as measured by the stature and fullness of Christ" (Eph. 3: 18, 4: 11–16). In the God-man Christ "there dwells bodily the entire fullness of the Godhead," so that, in the Church and through the Church, the fullness of the Godhead can be bestowed on each one of us (Col. 2: 9–10). This, however, can be realized in each of us only "with all the saints," through

the holy mysteries and the Holy Virtues, and based on Holy Faith and Holy Love (Eph. 3: 17-20).

Without the God-man, man is in fact without a head, indeed without a self, without an eternal self, without an immortal God-like self. Without the God-man, man does not exist; there is only less-than-man, half-man, or no man at all. And at this point we must add the following truth: without the God-man, man is always a slave to death, a slave to sin, a slave to the devil. Only through the God-man does man realize his God-ordained potential. He becomes "God by grace" and in this way achieves the full potential of his existence and his personhood. He reaches his Divine eternity through God's humanity. Living in the theanthropic body of the Church "with all the Saints" man achieves theosis by degrees, through the holy mysteries and the Holy Virtues. And he is filled with the joy of the holy message and the heavenly commandment of Saint Basil the Great: "A creature of God comes into existence and God is called."¹ Created with the potential to become God-man, man strives, within the theanthropic body of the Church, to make his mind resemble that of God, to achieve transformation into God-mind. "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2: 16). He even strives to resemble the will of God, to transform his will to God-will, and to make his body similar to the body of the God-man, to transform it to God-body. "The body is for the Lord and the Lord is for the body" (1 Cor. 6: 13). Theanthropized through the Church and in the Church, man reestablishes himself in his original God-like state, achieving this in ever-increasing measure through the

¹*Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. 35, Col. 506.

Divine virtue of excellent Christ-like ideas (Gal. 4: 19, 3: 27; Rom. 8: 29). But without the God-man and independently of Him, man always risks the danger of becoming like the devil, since sin is simultaneously the strength and the icon of the devil. Functioning independently of the God-man, man voluntarily reduces himself to a devil-like state of sin. He becomes a relative of the devil. "He that commits sin is of the devil" (1 John 3: 8). We must not forget that the principal objective of the devil is to deprive man of his God-like potential, to de-theanthropize him, to delete his Divinity, and to thus transform him into a being similar to himself. Humanistic anthropocentricity is in essence devilcenteredness. They both wish one thing: to belong only to themselves, to be only in themselves and for themselves. However, in this way, they actually bring themselves to the kingdom of the "second death" where there is neither God nor anything of God's (Rev. 21: 8, 20: 14).

That which has been discussed to this point is nothing other than the evangelical, apostolic, patristic, Orthodox humanism of God (Theohumanism, Theohominism).

3. All the European humanisms, from the most primitive to the most sophisticated, from the fetishistic to the papal, are based on a belief in man as he finds himself in the midst of his given spiritual and physical empirical situation and his historical context. In this view the entire essence of every humanism is man (*homo*), and encapsulated in the ontology of every humanism is nothing other than humanism (*homo hominis*). Man is the highest value, the supreme value. Man is the principal criterion, the ultimate criterion. "Man is the measure of everything." That, at its core (*in nuce*), is every humanism, every homanism. Therefore,

all humanisms, all hominisms are, in the final analysis, idolatrous and polytheistic in origin. Pre-Renaissance, Renaissance, and post-Renaissance—Protestant, philosophical, religious, social, scientific, cultural, or political—all the European humanisms strive consciously or subconsciously, but they strive unceasingly, for one result: to replace faith in the God-man with a belief in man, to replace the Gospel of the God-man with a gospel according to man, to replace the philosophy of the God-man with a philosophy according to man, to replace the culture of the God-man with a culture according to man. In brief, they seek to replace life according to the God-man with life according to man.

This has been developing for centuries until in the last century, in 1870 at the First Vatican Council, all these efforts achieved their pinnacle in the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope. This dogma subsequently became the central dogma of the papacy. In our own times, during the Second Vatican Council, this doctrine was discussed so persistently and so skillfully that the notion of its inviolability and inalterability was strongly reinforced. This doctrine has an overwhelming significance for the fate of European civilization, and for the apocalyptic times into which it has brought itself. Through this dogma all European humanisms have built their ideals and their idol: man has been declared the supreme godhead, the ultimate godhead. The European humanistic pantheon has established its Zeus.

Honesty is the language of Truth: the dogma concerning the infallibility of the 20th century pope is nothing other than the rebirth of idolatry and polytheism, the rebirth of idolatrous value judgments and criteria. *Horrible dictu*, but this also has to be said: the dogma concerning the infallibility of the pope was

introduced in the dogma of idolatrous humanism which, in the first instance, was Hellenic humanism. The value of everything was introduced as dogma. All characteristics of Hellenic culture and Hellenic civilization, their values, their philosophies, their crafts, their politics, their science were all introduced as dogma: "The measure of everything is man." And what does this amount to? It is a recitation of the dogma of idolatry. In this manner the point in time arrived when the self-sufficiency of European man became dogma, an objective for which European humanisms have longed for nostalgically for centuries.

The dogma regarding the infallibility of the pope is the Nietzschean assertion—*Ja-Sagung*—extended to the entire conception of European humanism. *Ja-Sagung* is part of European culture and civilization, both of which are effectively idolatrous and polytheistic in their objectives and their methods. The Gospel and the Commandment of the God-man are "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all (other things) shall be added to you" (Matth. 6: 33). But note what has been omitted from the proclamation of European humanistic culture and its civilization. There is no mention of the purpose of human existence or of the means by which man functions. The God-man is the Only Savior of man from his sins, from his death, and from the devil, the Only One who renews and immortalizes, who resurrects and elevates, who makes eternal and Divine, who theanthropizes man in all his worlds, and who categorically and clearly defines as the supreme purpose of the existence and the life of man that he should become perfect as God is perfect (Matth. 5: 48).

However, what did the European humanist not place, and what did he not dedicate as the purpose of human existence, in opposition to Him! The evangelical truth that "the entire world lies under the sway of the evil one," requiring the efforts of the God-man on this earth, cannot be refuted (1 John 5: 19–21). Or, as stated by the holy apostle Paul, the devil is "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4: 4). Between such a world which voluntarily "lies under the sway of the evil one" and the person who follows the God-man there is no common ground. He who follows the God-man is not allowed by the firm direction of Evangelic Truth to coexist with the humanist who justifies all of those things and declares them to be dogma. At this point it is always necessary to make a decisive, value-oriented determination and selection: either the God-man or man. The humanist in all his efforts represents himself as acting with self-sufficiency as the supreme value and highest criterion. There is no place here for the God-man. In the kingdom of humanism the place of the God-man had been usurped by the *Vicarius Christi*, and the God-man has thus been exiled to Heaven. This surely results in a peculiar deincarnation of Christ the God-man, does it not?

Through the dogma of infallibility the pope usurped for himself, that is for man, the entire jurisdiction and all the prerogatives which belong only to the Lord God-man. He effectively proclaimed himself as the Church, the papal church, and he has become in her the be-all and end-all, the self-proclaimed ruler of everything. In this way the dogma of the infallibility of the pope has been elevated to the central dogma (*svedogmat*) of the papacy. And the pope cannot deny this in any way as long as he remains pope of a humanistic papacy.

4. In the history of the human race there have been three principal falls: that of Adam, that of Judas, and that of the pope. The principal characteristic of falling into sin is always the same: wanting to be good for one's own sake; wanting to be perfect for one's own sake; wanting to be God for one's own sake. In this manner, however, man unconsciously equates himself to the devil, because the devil also wanted to become God for his own sake, to put himself in the place of God. And in this self-elevation he instantly became devil, completely separated from God, and always in opposition to Him. Therefore, the essence of sin, of every sin (*svegreha*), consists of this arrogant self-aggrandizement. This is the very essence of the devil himself, of Satan. It is nothing other than one's wanting to remain within one's own being, wanting nothing within one's self other than oneself. The entire devil is found here: in the desire to exclude God, in the desire to always be by himself, to always belong only to himself, to be entirely within himself and always for himself, to be forever hermetically sealed in opposition to God and everything that belongs to God.

And what is this? It is egotism and self-love embraced in all eternity, that is to say: it is hell. For that is essentially what the humanist is—entirely within himself, by himself, for himself, always spitefully closed in opposition to God. Here lies every humanism, every hominism. The culmination of such satanically oriented humanism is the desire to become good for the sake of evil, to become God for the sake of the devil. It proceeds from the promise of the devil to our forefathers in Paradise—that with his help, "they would become as gods" (Gen. 3: 5). Man was created with theanthropic potential by God who loves mankind, so that he might

voluntarily direct himself, through God, toward becoming God-man, based on the divinity of his nature. Man, however, with his free will sought sinlessness through sin, sought God through the devil. And assuredly, following this road he would have become identical with the devil had not God interceded in His immeasurable love of mankind and in His great mercy. By becoming man, that is to say God-man, he redirected man toward the God-man. He introduced him to the Church which is his body, to the reward (*podvig*) of theosis through the holy mysteries and the blessed virtues. And in this manner he gave man the strength to become "a perfect man, in the measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 13), to achieve, that is, the Divine destiny, to voluntarily become God-man by grace.

The fall of the pope is a consequence of the desire to substitute man for the God-man.

5. According to the mystical interpreter Saint John of Damascus, in the human world the God-man, Christ, is "the only thing new under the sun."¹ Indeed, this eternal news applies not only to His Theanthropic Presence but also to His Theanthropic Work and His Theanthropic Body, the Church. And man also is always new, eternally new, ("a new creation") in his theanthropic newness, in all his theanthropic experiences on the road to salvation, to sanctification, to transfiguration, to theosis, to becoming like the God-man. In this terrestrial world everything ages and everything dies. Only the person who has embodied himself in the God-man and is becoming like the God-man (*ubogocoveceni i obogocove-*

¹*Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, Footnote 3, P.G. 94, Col. 984.

cen), who shares the body of Christ, who under the God-man has been embodied in the Church and has become part of the Church (*ucrkovenjen i ocrkovenjen*), does not age and does not die, because he has become a living, organic part of the holy and eternal Theanthropic body of Christ, the Church, in which one's humanity develops and continuously "grows with the nurturing of God" (Col. 2: 19)—acquiring "the fullness of humanity as measured by the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). This means that one is growing and developing continuously and without limit toward unity with God in the Divine infinity with which the Thrice-brilliant Lord endowed humanity when he created man in the image and likeness of God.

The God-man Christ is so extraordinarily new and unique that in reality the "Truth" came from Him (John 1: 17), and through Him remained in our human world. Before Him and without Him—now and forever—Truth does not exist. Verily, it does not exist because only the Hypostasis of the God-man is Truth. "I am the Truth" (John 14: 6). And since man does not exist independently of the God-man there can be no truth for him independently of the God-man.

All is new in the God-man and because of Him. He Himself is first, followed by salvation, the teaching regarding salvation, and the means of salvation. And the God-man's message for the human race is uniquely new: Let us separate sin from the sinner, let us hate sin but love the sinner, let us kill sin yet save the sinner. Do not equate the sinner with the sin. Do not put the sinner to death because of sin. Save him from sin! A striking example of this is the woman found entangled in adultery. The all-merciful Savior separated her sin from her existence in the image and likeness of God. He

condemned the sin but had mercy on the sinner. "I do not condemn; go and sin no more" (John 8: 11). This is the Orthodox method of recovery, established as dogma, in the task of saving the sinner from sin. This method of Holy Tradition, developed in accordance with the wisdom of God and established in the Orthodox Church by the Holy Fathers, has been expressed in accordance with the Spirit of God by St. Symeon the New Theologian: "The good is not good when no good results."¹

In the light of this sacred, evangelical Orthodox Tradition it is an atrocity, contrary to the Gospel and anti-Christ, to kill a sinner because he has sinned. Accordingly, there is no "holy inquisition" that can be proclaimed as holy. In the final analysis all humanisms kill the sinner because of sin, exterminating the sinner along with the sin. They do not want the God-man, who is the only salvation of man from sin, from death, and from the devil. He who is not for the God-man is, as a consequence, against man, is in this way an assassin of man, and furthermore, is also committing suicide. He leaves man under the total domination by sin, of death and of the devil, from which only the God-man is able to save him, for no one else beneath the heavens can. By using the methods of sinners himself, the humanist inevitably commits suicide. He murders his own soul, he gives himself up to hell, to an eternal association with the devil, the man-killer from time immemorial. (John 8: 44).

6. What is it that the God-man gives to man which no one else is capable of giving? It is victory over death,

¹Footnote 4, *Homilies* 18 and 68 Zogaraïos edition, Smyrna 1886, pp. 105 and 364.

over sin, and over the devil, Eternal Life, Eternal Truth, Eternal Justice, Eternal Virtue, Eternal Love, Eternal Joy: the entire fullness of the Godhead and of Divine Perfection. As the Apostle tells us: the God-man gives to men "those things which God has prepared for those who love Him, which no eye has seen, which no ear has heard, and which have not entered the heart of man" (1 Cor. 2: 9).

In fact only He, the wondrous God-man, is the "one thing that is needed" (cf. Luke 10: 42) by man in all his worlds and in his every life. Therefore, only the God-man is justified in asking of us that which no one else has ever dared ask: that we love Him more than we love parents, siblings, children, friends, the earth, the angels, anyone and everyone in all the worlds, visible and invisible (Matth. 10: 37-39; Luke 14: 26, Rom. 8: 31-39).

7. The Second Vatican Council resulted in the rebirth of all European humanisms, the rebirth of cadavers. Since Christ the God-man is present in this terrestrial world, each and every humanism is a cadaver. Matters reached this stage because the Council persisted in maintaining the dogma concerning the infallibility of the pope (= *the man*). Examined from the vantage point of the eternally living God-man, the historic Lord Jesus, all humanisms resemble criminal utopias to a greater or lesser extent. In the name of man they find various ways to murder man, to exterminate him as a spiritual and physical entity. All the humanisms arrive at one tragic, irrational result: they strain at a gnat and they swallow a camel. In the matter of papal infallibility, the notion has been elevated to dogma. And it is a horror, a horror in the extreme. Why? It is because the very dogma

regarding the infallibility of man is nothing other than the shuddering funeral of every humanism, from the ideas that the Vatican has established as dogma to the satanic humanism of Sartre. In the humanistic pantheon of Europe all the gods are dead, with European Zeus at the forefront. Dead, until such time as there arises in their withered hearts a complete, self-denying repentance, accompanied by the lightning and thunder of Golgotha, with its resurrectional earthquakes and transformations, and with its richly yielding storms and ascensions. And then? Then, their doxologies to the living, eternal, wondrous God-man, the only lover of mankind in all the worlds, will be unending.

8. What is at the core of the dogma regarding papal (= *man's*) infallibility? It is the de-theanthropization of man. This is sought by all humanisms, even the religious ones. All return man to idolatry, to polytheism, to the dual death, spiritual as well as physical. Distancing itself from the God-man, every humanism by degrees becomes nihilism. This reveals the simultaneous bankruptcy of all humanisms, led by that of the papacy which, directly or indirectly, voluntarily or involuntarily, is the father of all European humanisms. The resulting bankruptcy, the disastrous bankruptcy of the papacy, lies in the dogma of papal infallibility. It is precisely this dogma of nihilism that is uppermost. For this, European man in a doctrinaire and determined manner has proclaimed the dogma of self-sufficiency, and in this way has asserted that the God-man is not needed. There is no place for Him on earth. He has been completely replaced by the representative of Christ—*Vicarius Christi*. Truly, this is the dogma by which all European human-

isms live, which they follow, and which they persistently proclaim.

All European humanisms in their essence are nothing other than an unending revolution against the God-man Christ. Using all possible methods they achieve *Umwertung aller Werte* (the overthrow of all values). The God-man is everywhere replaced by man. On all European thrones European humanists are seated. As a result there is not a single *Vicarius Christi* but innumerable ones in various costumes. In the final analysis the dogma concerning infallibility of the pope has led to the proclamation of the general infallibility of man. And from this followed the innumerable popes of all European cultures, of the Vatican, and of Protestantism. Among them, however, there are no essential differences because, in the thinking of Khomiakov the visionary of Truth, the papacy is the first Protestantism.

9. Infallibility is a natural theanthropic characteristic and a natural theanthropic function of the church which is the theanthropic Body of Christ, and whose eternal leader is the Truth, the All-Encompassing Truth, the Second Hypostasis of the All-Holy Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ the God-man. With respect to the dogma concerning papal infallibility, as a practical matter the pope has been proclaimed to be the Church, and the pope—a *man*—has usurped the place of the God-man. That is the ultimate triumph of humanism and simultaneously "the second death" (Rev. 20: 14, 21: 8) of the papacy, and through it and after it the death of every humanism. However, the dogma of papal infallibility is not only a heresy but the greatest heresy against the True Church of Christ, which has existed in our terrestrial world as a theanthropic body ever since the appear-

ance of the God-man. No other heresy has revolted so violently and so completely against the God-man Christ and His Church as has the papacy with the dogma of the pope-man's infallibility. There is no doubt about it. This dogma is the heresy of heresies, a revolt without precedent against the God-man Christ on this earth, a new betrayal of Christ, a new crucifixion of the Lord, this time not on wood but on the golden cross of papal humanism. And these things are hell, damnation for the wretched earthly being called man.

10. Is there a way out of these innumerable humanistic hells? Is there resurrection from these innumerable European graves? Is there a remedy for those innumerable deadly sicknesses? There is, there certainly is: repentance. That is the eternal message of the Gospel of the God-Man: "Repentance so that you may know the truth" (2 Tim. 2: 25). Otherwise it is not possible for anyone to believe in the all-saving Gospel of the God-man. "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1: 15). Repentance before the God-Man is the only medicine for sin, the unique medicine for all sins, even for the greatest of sins. There is no doubt. Repentance is the medicine even for this, the greatest sin of the papacy, centered in the arrogant dogma of papal infallibility, as it is also for every one of its sins, every humanism individually, and all humanisms together. Yes, yes, yes. From his beloved great sin of infallibility, European "infallible" man, European humanistic man, can only be saved through whole-hearted and all-transforming repentance before the wondrous, all-merciful, all-virtuous Lord Jesus Christ the God-man, the only Savior of the human race from all sins, from each evil, from each hell, from each devil, from each humanistic rationalism,

from any of the sins which the human imagination is able to conceive.

For these reasons all the holy God-bearing and God-minded Fathers, including those of the seven holy Oecumenical Synods, refer all problems in the Church of Christ to the problem of the Personhood of Christ the God-man, until that which is the greatest, the only, the most precious value to all human beings is found, not on this earth or on any other, but in the dominion of God. The Christological problem is their entire problem, fully and completely. For them Christ the God-man is the unique value of the Church of Christ in all the worlds. Their unending and eternal message is: Give up everything for Christ; do not give Christ up for anything! And around this holy signal echoes their ever-resounding message of joy: Not humanism but God-humanism! Not man but the God-man! Christ before all and above all!

11. How does an Orthodox Christian feel in the presence of Christ the God-man? He feels totally and completely sinful. That is his feeling, his attitude, his manner, his mindset, his speech, his conscience, his confession, his entire being. That feeling of total personal sinfulness in the presence of the Most Sweet Lord is the soul of his soul and the heart of his heart. Briefly examine the prayers of repentance, the odes, the hymns, the *stichera* in the *Parakletike* of Monday and even of Tuesday, and you will immediately verify that this sentiment constitutes a sacred duty and a prayerful reality for every Orthodox Christian without exception. This path has been explored by our immortal teachers, the Holy Fathers, who continuously direct us. Let us remember at least two of them, St. John of Damascus

and St. Symeon the New Theologian. Their saintliness is cherubic beyond any doubt. Their prayer is assuredly seraphic. Nevertheless, they themselves express a feeling and consciousness of utter personal sinfulness and simultaneously a deeply-felt attitude of repentance. That is the existential contradiction (antinomy) in our Orthodox, evangelical, apostolic faith, and our humility in this faith.

The infallible man and his opposite, the utterly sinful man, humility on the one hand and pride on the other. The incomparable nightingale of the Gospel of the God-man, St. John Chrysostom evangelizes: "The foundation of every one of our philosophies is humility."¹ Humility is the foundation of our philosophy concerning life and the world, concerning time and eternity, concerning the God-man and the Church. On the one hand, the foundation of every humanism, including even that which has been established as dogma, is pride, faith in man's reasoning, in his mind, and in his rationality. Pride transformed even the radiant Lucifer into a devil. Pride is the incurable mental sickness of the devil. Within it are found and from it emanate all the other diabolical evils. On the other hand, humility teaches us to commit our hope to and to have the utmost trust in the holy, catholic, theanthropic mind of the Church, "the mind of Christ." "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2: 16). We in the theanthropic body of Christ, the Orthodox Church, have Christ the God-man as everything: head, body, life, truth, love, righteousness, time, and eternity, and also through faith in Him and in our life in Him (Eph. 4:11-21). This is because "all things were created

¹PG, 51, 312.

through him and for him, he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body of the church, that in everything he might be preeminent" (Col. 1: 16-18). He the God-man and not a man, whomsoever he may be.

12. I humbly ask forgiveness because I, a worthless sinner, truly a worthless sinner, dared to stammer these few words regarding the Second Vatican Council. It was done in obedience. It was requested of me, the insignificant and worthless sinner. I carried out my task in obedience, honestly, conscientiously, with a heavy heart, with many sighs, and relying on the support of the first and foremost of the Holy Apostles, St. Peter (cf. 1 Peter 3: 15). If any reader of these reflections feels injured, I beg forgiveness. It is because of my sinfulness that I have been unable to better express the truth that flows from the Eternal Truth. And I further plead that you beseech the Sweet Lord Jesus, who has compassion and is ever compassionate toward every repentant sinner, to forgive me the many sins of my youth as well as my more recent sins. For I believe, with all my heart I believe, that the prayer of a righteous person has enormous value (James 5: 16), even in the case of a worthless sinner as I am in all my being.

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Translator's Note: Obviously, as the author uses them, "Europe" and "European" are not simply geographic terms, but refer to a way of life that has developed in Christian Europe, which today is advocated as the regulator par excellence of matters of the world and of the life of man in general. This is the source of what the

author identifies as "European humanism" and "Ecumenism." In the contemporary church Ecumenism is partially accepted and various aspects of this position have penetrated into and are applied to all aspects of human life, giving it ecumenical or universal characteristics. Only one who is able to recognize the frightful dimensions of this phenomenon and its results, and who simultaneously understands what the Church truly is, will be able to appreciate the need for the "hardness" of thought exhibited by the author toward "European civilization" and its "Ecumenism." At this point personal responsibility transfers to the cross of universal responsibility, where the responsibility of everyone is for everything, according to the author, "the characteristic attribute of every Christian feeling."



Sisters of Chelie Monastery

THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE OF SAINT ISAAC THE SYRIAN¹

Introduction

In European philosophy man always appears to a greater or lesser extent as a fragmented being. Nowhere is he seen as whole, nowhere is he seen as complete and integrated but always as broken and fragmented. There is no philosophical system in which man is not broken up into parts that would defeat the attempt of any thinker to put them together into a single whole. On one hand, realism brings man down to the level of the senses, and then through the senses to things, to matter, so that a man is no longer his own master but scattered among things. On the other hand, rationalism separates man and his understanding, seeing the latter as the chief fount of truth and the highest measure of all that is, attributing all worth to it, making it an absolute and idolizing it, while at the same time belittling the other psychic and physical powers of man. Critical thought, for its part, is little more than an apologia for a rational-

¹All the references in the text are from: Isaac the Syrian, *The Ascetic Writings of our Holy Father Isaac the Syrian*, ed. Nicephoros Theotokis (Leipzig, 1770), re-edited Joachim Spetsieris (Athens, 1895); Archimandrite Justin Popovich's article "The Theory of Knowledge of Saint Isaac the Syrian" appeared in: *Sourozh*, 15, 16, 17 (1984).

ism and sensualism that drags understanding, and man with it, down to the level of the senses. As for pantheism and all such monistic systems, they regard the world and man as a mass of contradictory opposites which can never be brought to a single, logical unity. All of these philosophical systems have the same result: a superficial, phenomenalist understanding both of man and of the world.

The man of phenomenalist philosophy — a philosophy that is always relativist as well — is man without a central focal point. Where does the world stand? And where does man? What is the foundation of the intellect and of knowledge? Man tries to explain himself in terms of things, but with a total lack of success, for by explaining himself in terms of things, man in the end is reduced to a thing himself, to matter. However much he may struggle to do so, the man of phenomenalist philosophy is in no position to testify to the objective reality of things, still less is he able to show that things possess truth. By attempting to explain man by man, philosophy achieves a bizarre result: it presents a mirror image of a mirror image. In the last analysis, such philosophy, whatever its path, is centered on matter and on man. And one thing follows from all this: the impossibility of any true knowledge of man or of the world.

This result compels the philosophical spirit of man to make conjectures that transcend both man and matter. Through idealism he takes a leap into the supernatural. But this leap in turn leads to scepticism, for philosophical idealism regards man as a meta-empirical reality that can neither be described nor proven.

Man, as understood in relativist philosophy, is subject to a tragic destiny, for he has demonstrated that truth transcends both man and matter. There is an unbridge-

able gulf between man and truth. Man is on one side of this gulf and can find no way of getting to the other where transcendent Truth is to be found. But the power of Truth, from the other side, responds to the powerlessness of man on this side. Transcendent Truth crosses the gulf, arrives on our side of it and reveals itself — himself — in the person of Christ, the God-man. In Him transcendent Truth becomes immanent in man. The God-man reveals the truth in and through Himself. He reveals it, not through thought or reason, but by the life that is His. He not only has the truth, He is Himself the Truth. In Him Being and Truth are one. Therefore, He, in His person, not only defines truth but shows the way to it: he who abides in Him will know the truth, and the truth will make him free (*cf.* John 8: 32) from sin, falsehood, and death.

In the person of the God-man, God and man are indissolubly united. Man's understanding is not overthrown, but is renewed, purified, and sanctified. It is deepened and divinized and made capable of grasping the truths of life in the light of God-made-man. In the God-man, absolute Truth has in its entirety been given in a real and personal way. This is why He alone, among those born on earth, both has integral knowledge of the truth and can hand it on. The man who desires to know the truth has only to be made one with the God-man, to become one flesh with Him, to become a member of his divine and human Body, the Church (Eph. 5: 30; 3: 6). Becoming such, a man acquires "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2: 16), thinking, living, feeling in Christ, and thus coming to an integral knowledge of the Truth.

For the man in Christ, the antinomies of the mind are not irreconcilable opposites; they are simply ruptures

caused by the upheaval of original sin in man. Uniting himself to Christ, man feels in himself a coming-together of fragmented parts, a healing of the intellect, a wholeness and integration that make him capable of integrated understanding.

Truth is objectively given in the person of Christ, the God-man. But the way in which this becomes subjective — that is, the practical side of the Christian theory of knowledge — was fully developed by the Fathers, those experienced, holy, and evangelical philosophers. Among the most outstanding of these holy philosophers was the great ascetic, Isaac the Syrian. In his writings, with a rare understanding based on experience, he traces the process of the healing and purification of man's organs of knowledge, his growth in understanding, and his progressive path through experience to the apprehension of eternal Truth. In the philosophy of St. Isaac the Syrian, based on the experience of grace, the principles and methodology of the Orthodox theory of knowledge have found one of their most perfect expressions. I shall now try to sketch out this theory of knowledge, or *gnoseology*.

The sickness of the organs of understanding

The character of a man's knowledge depends on the disposition, nature, and condition of his organs of understanding. At all levels knowledge depends intrinsically on the means of understanding. Man does not make truth; the act of understanding is an act of making one's own a truth which is already objectively given. This integration has an organic character, not unlike that of the grafting of a slip onto a vine, or its life in and

from the vine (cf. John 15: 1–6). Understanding is, then, a fruit on the tree of the human person. As is the tree, so are its fruits, as are the organs of understanding, so is the knowledge they engender.

Analyzing man by his empirical gifts, St. Isaac the Syrian finds that his organs of understanding are sick. "Evil is a sickness of soul," whence all the organs of understanding are made sick.¹ Evil has its perceptions, the passions, and "the passions are illnesses of the soul."² Evil and the passions are not natural to the soul; they are accidents, adventitious, and intrusive,³ an unnatural addition to the soul.⁴

What are the passions in themselves? They are "a certain hardness or insensitivity of being."⁵ Their causes are to be found in the things of life themselves.⁶ The passions are the desire for wealth and amassing of goods, for ease and bodily comfort; they are thirst for honor and the exercise of power; they are luxury and frivolity; they are the desire for glory from men and fear for one's own body.⁷ All these passions have one common name — "the world."⁸ "The world means carnal conduct and a carnal mind."⁹ The passions are the attacks of the world on man by means of the things of the world. Divine grace is the only power capable of repulsing them.¹⁰ When the passions make their home in man, they uproot his soul.¹¹ They confuse the mind, filling it with fantastic forms, images, and desires,¹² so that his thoughts are disturbed and filled with fantasy. "The world is a prostitute,"¹³ which, by means of its

1. Letter 4, p. 380; 2. Log. 83, p. 317; 3. id; 4. Log. 82, p. 314; 5. Log. 69, p. 271; 6. Log. 6, p. 32; 7. Log. 30, p. 132; 8. id. p. 131; 9. id. p. 132; 10. Log. 38, p. 164; 11. Log. 26, p. 112; 12. Log. 56, p. 227; 13. Log. 85, p. 329.

soul-destroying desires, beguiles the soul, undermines its virtues, and destroys its God-given purity. Then, the soul, having itself become impure and a prostitute, gives birth to impure knowledge.

A feeble soul, a diseased intellect, a weakened heart and will — in brief, sick organs of understanding — can only engender, fashion, and produce sick thoughts, sick feelings, sick desires, and sick knowledge.

The healing of the organs of understanding

St. Isaac gives a precise diagnosis of the sickness of the soul and of its organs of understanding, and just as clearly he gives the remedy, offering it categorically and with conviction. Since the passions are a sickness of the soul, the soul can only be healed by purification from the passions and from evil.¹⁴ The virtues are the health of the soul, as the passions are its sickness.¹⁵ The virtues are the remedies that progressively eliminate sickness from the soul and from the organs of understanding. This is a slow process, demanding much effort and great patience.¹⁶

The soul is made drunk by the passions but can recover its health if it will use the virtues as the path to sobriety.¹⁷ The virtues, however, are woven through with sorrow and afflictions.¹⁸ St. Isaac says that every virtue is a cross,¹⁹ and even that sorrows and afflictions are the source of the virtues.²⁰ He therefore expressly

14. Log. 86, p. 354; 15. Log. 83, p. 317; 16) cf. Log. 38, p. 164; 17. cf. id. p. 165; 18. Log. 37, p. 161; 19. Log. 19, p. 73; 20. Log. 27, p. 119.

advocates a love of oppression and sorrow, so that by them a man may be freed from the things of this world and have a mind that is detached from the world's confusion.²¹ For man must first free himself from the material world in order to be born of God. Such is the economy of grace; such, too, is the economy of knowledge.

If a man resolves to treat and heal his soul, he must first apply himself to a careful examination of his whole being. He must learn to distinguish good from evil, the things of God from those of the devil, for "discernment is the greatest of the virtues."²² The acquisition of the virtues is a progressive and organic process: one virtue follows another.²³ One depends on the other; one is born of the other: "Every virtue is the mother of the next."²⁴ Among the virtues there is not only an ontological order, but also a chronological one. The first among them is faith.

Faith

It is by the ascesis of faith that the treatment and cure of a soul which is sick with the passions is begun. Once faith begins to live in a man, the passions begin to be uprooted from his soul. But "until the soul becomes intoxicated with faith in God, until it comes to feel faith's power," it can neither be healed of the passions nor overcome the material world.²⁵ There is both a nega-

21. Log. 1, pp. 5 and 2; 22. Log. 7, p. 33; cf. Log. 26, p. 109; Log. 18, p. 64; 23. Log. 46, p. 190; 24. Log. 68, p. 270; 25. Log. 1, p. 2.

tive side to the ascesis of faith, freedom from sinful matter, and a positive side, oneness with God.²⁶

The soul, which was dispersed by the senses among the things of this world, is brought back to itself by the ascesis of faith, by fasting from material things and by devoting itself to a constant remembrance of God. This is the foundation of all good things.²⁷ Freedom from enslavement to sinful matter is essential for advancement in the spiritual life.²⁸ The beginning of this new way of life is found in the concentration of one's thoughts on God, in incessant pondering on the words of God, and in a life of poverty.²⁹

Through faith the mind, which was previously dispersed among the passions, is concentrated, freed from sensuality, and endowed with peace and humility of thought.³⁰ When it lives by the senses in a sensual world, the mind is sick.³¹ With the help of faith, however, the mind is delivered from the prison of this world, where it has been stifled by sin, and enters into the new age, where it breathes in a wondrous new air.³² "The sleep of the mind" is as dangerous as death, and it is therefore essential to rouse the mind by faith to the performance of spiritual works,³³ by which man will overcome himself and drive out the passions.³⁴ "Drive out self, and the enemy will be driven from your side."³⁵

In the ascesis of faith, man is asked to act according to a paradox that denies understanding: "Be dead in your life, and you will live after death."³⁶ By faith the mind is healed and acquires wisdom. The soul becomes

26. *cf.* Log. 23, p. 90; 27. *cf.* Log. 26 p. 109; 28. Log. 34, p. 150; 29. Log. 1, p. 2; 30. Log 5, p. 23; *cf.* Log. 1, p. 3. 31. Log. 25, p. 106; 32. Log. 15, p. 54; 33. *cf.* Log. 26, p. 115t 34. *Id.* p. 111; 35. Log. 30, p. 127; 36. Log. 44, p. 184.

wise when it stops "consorting shamelessly with promiscuous thoughts."³⁷ "Love of the body is a sign of unbelief."³⁸ Faith frees the intellect from the categories of the senses and sobers it by means of fasting, by pondering on God³⁹ and by vigils.⁴⁰

Intemperance and a full stomach cloud the mind,⁴¹ distract it, and disperse it among fantasies and passions. The knowledge of God cannot be found in a body that loves pleasure.⁴² It is from the seed of fasting that the blade of a healthy understanding grows — and it is from satiety that debauchery comes, and impurity from excess.⁴³

The thoughts and desires of the flesh are like a restless flame in a man, and the way to healing is to plunge the intellect into the ocean of the mysteries of Holy Scripture.⁴⁴ Unless it is freed from earthly possessions, the soul cannot be freed from disturbing thoughts, nor feel peace of mind without dying to the senses.⁴⁵ The passions darken the thoughts and blind the mind.⁴⁶ Troubled, chaotic thoughts arise from an abuse of the stomach.⁴⁷

Shame and the fear of God steady the tumult of the mind; the lack of this shame and this fear disturb the balance of the understanding, making it fickle and unstable.⁴⁸ The mind is only on a firm foundation if it keeps the Lord's commandments⁴⁹ and is ready to endure suffering and affliction.⁵⁰ If it is enslaved by the things of life, it is darkened.⁵¹ Collecting himself through

37. Log. 1, pp. 3 and 4; 38. Log. 26, p. 116; 39. *id.* p. 109; *cf.* Log. 38, p. 165; 40. Log. 29, p. 125; 41. Log. 34, p. 147; 42. Log. 56, p. 223; 43. Log. 69, p. 272; 44. Log. 1, p.4; 45. Log. 5, p. 23; 46. Log. 26, p. 111; 47. Log. 56, p. 221; 48. Log. 1, p.4; 49. Log. 36, p. 160; 50. Log. 30, p. 129; 51. Log. 2, p. 10.

faith, a man awakens his intellect towards God,⁵² and by prayerful silence cleanses his mind⁵³ and overcomes the passions.⁵⁴ The soul is restored to health by silence. It is therefore necessary to train oneself to silence — and this is a labor that brings sweetness to the heart.⁵⁵ It is through silence that a man reaches peace from unwanted thoughts.⁵⁶

Faith brings peace to the intellect and, in bringing it, uproots rebellious thoughts. Sin is the source of restlessness and strife in the thoughts and is also the source of man's struggle against heaven and with other men. "Be at peace with yourself, and you will bring peace to heaven and to earth."⁵⁷ Until faith appears, the intellect is dispersed among the things of this world; it is by faith that this fragmentation of the intellect is overcome.⁵⁸ The wandering of the thoughts is provoked by the demon of harlotry,⁵⁹ as is the wandering of the eyes by the spirit of uncleanness.⁶⁰

By faith the intellect is confirmed in pondering God. The way of salvation is that of the constant remembrance of God.⁶¹ The intellect separated from remembrance of God is like a fish out of water.⁶² The freedom of a true man consists in his freedom from the passions, in his resurrection with Christ, and in a joyous soul.⁶³

The passions can only be overcome by the practice of the virtues,⁶⁴ and every passion must be fought to the death.⁶⁵ Faith is the first and chief weapon in the

52. Log. 3, p. 14; 53. Log. 23, p. 93; 54. Log. 41, p. 172; 55. Log. 34, p. 149; 56. Log. 15, p. 55; 57. Log. 30, p. 127; 58. Log. 5, p. 21; cf. Log. 26, p. 110; 59. Log. 2, p. 9; cf. Log. 43, p. 180; 60. Log. 26, p. 112. 61. Log. 5, p. 26; 62. Log. 30, p. 127; 63. id.; 64. Log. 68, p. 269; cf. Log. 81, p. 310; 65. Log. 38, p. 166; cf. Log. 44, p. 184; Log. 56, p. 230.

struggle with the passions, for faith is the light of the mind that drives away the darkness of the passions and the strength of the intellect that banishes sickness from the soul.⁶⁶

Faith bears within itself not only its own principle and substance, but the principle and substance of all the other virtues — developing as they do one from the other and encircling one another like the annual rings of a tree. If faith can be said to have a language, that language is prayer.

Prayer

It is by the ascesis of faith that a man conquers egotism, steps beyond the bounds of self, and enters into a new, transcendent reality which also transcends subjectivity. In this new reality new laws rule; what is old has passed away and all is made new. Plunged into the unknown depths of this new reality, the ascetic of faith is led and guided by prayer; he feels, thinks, and lives by prayer.

Tracing this path of faith in the intellect of man, St. Isaac notes that the intellect is guarded and guided by prayer, every good thought being transformed by prayer into a pondering on God.⁶⁷ But prayer is also a hard struggle, calling the whole person into action. Man crucifies himself in prayer,⁶⁸ crucifying the passions and sinful thoughts that cling to his soul. "Prayer is the slaying of the carnal thoughts of man's fleshy life."⁶⁹

66. Log. 12, p. 49; 67. Log. 35, p. 155; 68. id. p. 151; 69. Log. 69, p. 272.

Patient perseverance in prayer is for man a very hard ascesis, that of the denial of self.⁷⁰ This is fundamental to the work of salvation. Prayer is the fount of salvation, and it is by prayer that all the other virtues — and all good things — are acquired.⁷¹ This is why a man of prayer is assailed by monstrous temptations from which he is protected and saved only by prayer.

The surest guardian of the intellect is prayer.⁷² It drives away the clouds of the passions and illumines the intellect,⁷³ bringing wisdom to the mind.⁷⁴ Unceasing abiding in prayer is a true sign of perfection.⁷⁵

Spiritual prayer turns into ecstasy in which are revealed the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, and the intellect enters that sphere of holy unknowing that is greater than knowledge.⁷⁶

Begun thus by faith, the healing of the organs of understanding is continued by prayer. The bounds of human personality are pushed wider and wider, self-centeredness being progressively replaced by God-centeredness.

Love

"Love is born of prayer,"⁷⁷ just as prayer is born of faith. The virtues are of one substance, and are thus born of one another. Love for God is a sign that the new reality into which a man is led by faith and prayer is far greater than that which has gone before. Love for God and man is the work of prayer and faith; a true love for man is in fact impossible without faith and prayer.

70. id. 71. Log. 21, p. 83; 72. Log. 49, p. 205; 73. Log. 14, p. 53; 74. Log. 35, p. 155; 75. Log. 85, p. 346; 76. Log. 32, p. 140; 77. Log. 35, p. 156.

By faith man changes worlds: he moves from the limited world to the limitless, where he lives no longer by the laws of the senses but by the laws of prayer and love. St. Isaac lays great emphasis on the conviction he came to through his ascetic experience: that love for God comes through prayer — "Love is the fruit of prayer."⁷⁸ One can receive love from God through prayer and cannot in any way acquire it without the struggle of prayer. Since man comes to the knowledge of God through faith and prayer, it is strictly true that "love is born of knowledge."⁷⁹

Through faith man renounces the law of egotism; he renounces his sinful soul. Though he loves his soul, he loathes the sin that is in it. By prayer, he strives to replace the law of egotism with the law of God, to replace passions with virtues, to replace human life with divine life and thereby heal the soul of its sin. This is why St. Isaac teaches that "the love of God lies in self-denial of the soul."⁸⁰

Impurity and sickness of soul are unnatural accretions; they are no part of its created nature, for "purity and health are the kingdom of the soul."⁸¹ A soul weakened by the passions is a ready ground for the cultivation of hatred, and "love is only acquired through healing of the soul."⁸²

Love is of God, "for God is love" (1 John 4: 8). "He who acquires love puts on with it God himself."⁸³ God has no bounds, and love is therefore boundless and without limit,⁸⁴ so that "he who loves by and in God loves all things equally and without distinction." St. Isaac says of such a man that he has achieved perfec-

78. Log. 69, p. 272; 79. Log. 38, p. 164; cf. Log. 84, p. 326; 80. Log. 69, p. 272. 81. Let. 4, p. 378; 82. id. p. 367; 83. Log. 81, p. 308; 84. Log. 58, p. 236.

tion.⁸⁵ As an example of perfect love, St. Isaac quotes the wish of the holy Abba Agathon: "to find a leper and change bodies with him."⁸⁶

In the kingdom of love the antinomies of the mind disappear. The man who strives in love enjoys a foretaste of the harmony of Paradise in himself and in God's world around him, for he has been delivered from the hell of self-centeredness and has entered into the paradise of divine values and perfections. In St. Isaac's words: "Paradise is the love of God, in which lies the sweetness of all blessings."⁸⁷ Hell is the absence of the love of God, and those tortured in hell are tortured by the whiplash of love."⁸⁸ When a man acquires perfectly the love of God, he acquires perfection.⁸⁹ St. Isaac therefore recommends: "First acquire love, which is the original form of man's contemplation of the Holy Trinity."⁹⁰

Freeing himself from the passions, man disengages himself step by step from that self-absorption that characterizes humanism. He leaves the sphere of death-dealing anthropocentrism and enters the sphere of the Holy Trinity. Here he receives into his soul the divine peace, wherein the oppositions and contradictions that arise from the categories of time and space lose their death-dealing power, and where he can clearly perceive his victory over sin and death.

Humility

*F*aith has its own thought-forms, having as it does its own way of life. A Christian not only lives by faith

85. Log. 43, p. 180; 86. Log. 81, p. 308; cf. Letter 4, p. 374; 87. Log. 72, p. 282; 88. Log. 84, p. 326; 89. Log. 85, p. 348; 90. Letter 4, p. 387.

(2 Cor. 5: 7) but also thinks by faith. Faith presents a new way of thinking, through which is effected all the work of knowing in the believing man. This new way of thinking is humility. Within the infinite reality of faith, the intellect abases itself before the ineffable mysteries of new life in the Holy Spirit. The pride of the intellect gives way to humility and modesty replaces presumption. The ascetic of faith protects all his thoughts through humility, and thereby also ensures for himself the knowledge of eternal truth.

Drawing its strength from prayer, humility goes on growing and growing without end. St. Isaac teaches that prayer and humility are always equally balanced, and that progress in prayer means progress also in humility, and vice versa.⁹¹ Humility is a power that collects the heart within itself⁹² and prevents its dissipating itself in proud thoughts and lustful desires. Humility is upheld and protected by the Holy Spirit, and not only draws man to God but also God to man.⁹³ Furthermore, humility was the cause of the Son of God taking flesh, that closest union of God with man: "Humility made God a man on earth."⁹⁴ Humility is "the adornment of divinity, for the Word made flesh spoke with us through the human body with which he had clothed himself."⁹⁵

Humility is a mysterious, divine power which is given only to the saints, to those who are perfected in the virtues, and it is given by grace. It "contains all things within itself."⁹⁶ By the grace of the Holy Spirit "the mysteries are revealed to the humble,"⁹⁷ and it is these

91. Log. 21, p. 83; 92. id; 93. id. p. 84; 94. Log. 56, p. 229; 95. Log. 20, p. 76; 96. id. p. 79. 97. id. p. 80; cf. Log. 23, p. 97; Log. 37, p. 160.

humble ones who are thereby perfect in wisdom.⁹⁸ "The humble man is the fount of the mysteries of the new age."⁹⁹

Humility is temperance, and "the two of them prepare in the soul a pledge for the Holy Trinity."¹⁰⁰ Temperance derives from humility, and it is by humility that the intellect is healed and made whole. "From humility flow a meekness and recollection that is the temperance of the senses."¹⁰¹ "Humility adorns the soul with temperance."¹⁰²

When turned towards the world, a humble man reveals the whole of his personality through humility, imitating in this God incarnate. "Just as the soul is unknown and invisible to bodily sight, so a humble man is unknown among men."¹⁰³ He not only seeks to be unnoticed by men but to be as utterly recollected within himself as is possible, becoming "as one who does not exist on earth, who has not yet come into being, and who is utterly unknown even to his own soul."¹⁰⁴ A humble man belittles himself before all men,¹⁰⁵ but God therefore glorifies him, for "where humility blossoms, there God's glory sprouts abundantly,"¹⁰⁶ and the plant of the soul produces an imperishable flower.

Grace and Freedom

The person of Christ the God-man presents in itself the ideal image of human personality and knowledge. The person of Christ of itself traces and defines the path

98. Log. 20, p. 79; 99. Log. 43, p. 176; 100. Log. 58, p. 236. 101. Log. 81, p. 312; 102. Log. 23, p. 93; 103. Log. 81, p. 311; 104. id. 105. Log. 5, p. 28; 106. id.

of a Christian's life in every way. In Him is found the most perfect realization of the mystical union of God and man, while at the same time He reveals both God's work in man and man's in God.

God and man working together is the basic indication of Christian activity in the world. Man works with God and God with man (cf. 1 Cor. 3: 9). Working within and around himself, the Christian gives himself entirely to ascesis, but he does this, and is able to do it, only through the ceaseless activity of the divine power that is grace. For the Christian no thought, no feeling, no action can come from the Gospel without the help of God's grace. Man, for his part, brings the desire, but God gives the grace, and it is from this mutual activity, or synergy, that Christian personality is born.

On every rung of the ladder of perfection, grace is essential to the Christian. A man can make no single evangelical virtue his own without the help and support of God's grace. Everything in Christianity is by grace and free will, for all is the common work of God and man. St. Isaac particularly stresses this common work of man's will and God's grace in the whole of a Christian's life. Grace opens a man's eyes to the discernment of good and evil. It strengthens the sense of God within him, opens the future to him and fills him with mystical light.¹⁰⁷

The more grace God gives to the man of faith, the more He reveals to him the abysses of evil in the world and in man. At the same time, He allows greater and greater temptations to assail him, that he may test the God-given power of grace and may feel and learn that

107. Log. 19, p. 72

it is only by the help of grace that he can overcome the ever more fearsome and scandalous temptations. For as soon as grace perceives that a man's soul is becoming self-sufficient, making him great in his own sight, it leaves him and lets temptations assail him until he becomes aware of his sickness and humbly takes refuge in God.¹⁰⁸

By the working together of God's grace and his own will, a man grows in faith to perfect stature.¹⁰⁹ This happens by degrees, for grace enters into the soul "little by little,"¹¹⁰ being given before all else to the humble. The greater the humility, the greater the grace, and wisdom is contained within grace. "The humble are endowed with wisdom by grace."¹¹¹

Grace-filled wisdom gradually reveals the mysteries to the humble, one after the other, culminating in the mystery of suffering. The humble know why man suffers, for grace reveals to them the meaning of suffering. The greater the grace that a man has, the greater his grasp of the meaning and purpose of suffering and temptation. If he drives grace from him by sloth and love of sin, a man drives from himself the only means he has of finding meaning and justification for his sufferings and temptations.

The Purification of the Intellect

By an unceasing renewal of self through a grace-filled asceticism, a man gradually drives sin and the

108. id. 109. id. p. 73; cf. 46, pp. 192-3; 110. Log. 57, p. 233. 111. Log. 46, p. 193.

passions from his whole being and from his organs of understanding, in this way healing them of these death-dealing illnesses. The healing of the organs of understanding from sin and the passions is at the same time their purification. Especial care must be taken with the chief organ of understanding, the intellect, for it has a particularly important role in the realm of human personality.

In nothing else is powerful vigilance as vital as in the work of purifying the intellect. For this task, the ascetic of faith must do battle with all his forces, so that with the help of the grace-filled evangelical virtues, he may renew and transform his intellect. St. Isaac offers us his rich experience in this.

According to him, impurity and heaviness of the intellect come from a satiated stomach.¹¹² Fasting is therefore the chief means of purifying the intellect. The intellect is by nature fine and delicate,¹¹³ while heaviness is an unnatural addition introduced by sin. It is through prayer that the intellect is refined and rendered clear.¹¹⁴ Working on himself, a man tears the hard crust of sin from his intellect, refines it, and makes it capable of discernment.¹¹⁵

Transforming himself with the help of grace-filled ascetic effort, a man acquires purity of intellect and with this purified intellect "comes to see the mysteries of God."¹¹⁶ "The purification of the body produces a state that rejects the stain of the impurity of the flesh. The cleansing of the soul frees it from the secret passions that arise in the mind. The cleansing of the intellect takes place through the revelation of the mysteries."¹¹⁷

112. Log. 26, p. 111; 113) Log. 8, p. 36; 114. Log. 35, p. 154; 115. Log. 9, p. 41; 116. id; 117. Log. 19, p. 63.

Only the mind that has been cleansed by grace can offer pure, spiritual knowledge. "Until the mind is freed from its manifold thoughts and becomes completely pure, it cannot receive spiritual knowledge."¹¹⁸ The men of this world cannot cleanse their minds because of their great knowledge and acceptance of wickedness. Few there are who are able to return to man's original purity of mind.¹¹⁹

Perseverance in prayer cleanses the intellect, illumines it, and fills it with the light of truth.¹²⁰ The virtues, led by compassion, give the intellect peace and light.¹²¹ The cleansing of the intellect is not a dialectical, discursive and theoretical activity, but an act of grace through experience and is ethical in every respect. The intellect is purified by fasting, vigils, silence, prayer, and other ascetic practices.¹²²

"What is purity of intellect? Purity of intellect is the achievement, through striving in the virtues, of divine illumination."¹²³ It is the fruit of ascetic effort in the virtues. The practice of the virtues increases grace in a man, and the bringing of grace to the intellect cleanses it from impure thoughts.¹²⁴ It is through asceticism that the intellect of a saint becomes pure, clear, and discerning.¹²⁵ "Purity of soul was an original charism of our nature. Until it has been purified from the passions, the soul has not been healed of the sickness of sin and cannot attain to the glory that it lost through transgression. If a man becomes worthy of purification — or health of soul — his intellect then truly receives into

118. *id.* p. 70; 119. Log. 44, p. 183; 120. Log. 23, pp. 97, 98.
121. Log. 23, p. 91; 122. Log. 83, p. 320; *cf.* Log. 86, p. 353;
123. *Id.* p. 319; 124. Log. 11, p. 46; 125. Log. 81, p. 310.

itself joy through spiritual awareness, for he becomes a son of God and a brother of Christ."¹²⁶

If he overcomes the passions, a man achieves purity of soul.¹²⁷ The "darkening of the intellect" comes from lack of compassion and from laziness.¹²⁸ The virtues are "the wings of the intellect," by the help of which it rises to heaven.¹²⁹ Christ sent down the Holy Spirit upon His apostles, and the Holy Spirit purified their intellects and made them perfect, slaying in them the old man of the passions and bringing the new, spiritual man to life.¹³⁰

Fragmented by sinful and impure thoughts, the intellect recollects itself through prayer, silence, and the other ascetic practices.¹³¹ When the intellect frees itself by repentance from its close connection with the passions, at first it is like a bird that has had its wings clipped. It strives to rise above earthly things through prayer, but it cannot, being tied to the earth. The ability to fly comes only after long striving in the virtues, for it is then that it collects itself and learns to fly.¹³²

The love of God is a power that brings the intellect to itself.¹³³ The reading of hymns and psalms, pondering on death and the hope of future life are all "things that collect the intellect and protect it from fragmentation."¹³⁴ The intellect is destined to reign over the passions,¹³⁵ to rule over the senses,¹³⁶ and to control them.¹³⁷

The purpose of all the laws and commandments of God is purity of heart.¹³⁸ God took flesh to cleanse our hearts and souls from evil and to bring them back to

126. Log. 86, p. 354; 127. Letter 4, p. 377; 128. Log. 30, p. 129;
129. Log. 56, p. 228; 130. Letter 4, p. 390; 131. Log. 14, p. 53; *cf.* Log. 23, p. 99; 132. Log. 56, p. 228; *cf.* Log. 23, p. 102; 133. Log. 24, p. 104;
134. Log. 68, p. 269; 135. Log. 32, p. 137; 136. Log. 8, p. 37; 137. Log. 31, p. 134; 138) Log. 32, p. 13.

their original state.¹³⁹ But there is a certain difference between purity of heart and purity of intellect. St. Isaac writes: "In what does purity of intellect differ from purity of heart? Purity of intellect is one thing, but purity of heart is another. For the intellect is one of the senses of the soul, but the heart contains the interior senses and governs them. It is their root. And if the root is holy, then the branches are also holy. If then, the heart is purified, clearly all the senses are purified."¹⁴⁰

The heart acquires purity by means of many trials, tribulations, and tears, and by the mortifying of all that is of the world.¹⁴¹ Tears cleanse the heart from impurity.¹⁴² To the question what is the sign by which one can know if a man has achieved purity of heart, St. Isaac replies: "When he sees all men as good, and no one appears to him to be unclean or profane."¹⁴³

Purity of heart and intellect are acquired through asceticism. "Asceticism is the mother of holiness."¹⁴⁴ The silent practice of bodily virtue cleanses the body of the matter that is in it.¹⁴⁵ However, "strenuous bodily effort without purity of intellect is like a barren womb and withered breasts. It cannot come near to the knowledge of God. It wearies the body but has no concern to uproot the passions from the intellect. Thus it profits nothing."¹⁴⁶

The sign of purity is: to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep; to be in pain with the sick and in anguish with the sinners; to rejoice with the repentant and to participate in the agony of those who

139. Letter 4, p. 367; 140. Log. 83, pp. 319-320; 141. Id. p. 320; 142. Log. 85, p. 342; 143. Id. p. 341; 144. Log. 16, p. 56; 145. Log. 17, p. 59; 146. Log. 56, p. 222.

suffer; to criticize no man and, in the purity of one's own mind, to see all men as good and holy.¹⁴⁷

The intellect cannot be cleansed nor can it be glorified with Christ if the body does not suffer with and for Christ; the glory of the body is "temperate submission before God, and the glory of the intellect is the true contemplation of God."¹⁴⁸ The beauty of temperance is achieved through fasting, prayer, and tears.¹⁴⁹ Purity of heart and intellect, the healing of the intellect and the other organs of understanding, all this is the fruit of long striving under grace, in asceticism. In the pure intellect of the ascetic of faith there bubbles up that fountain of light which pours sweetness upon the mystery of life and of the world.¹⁵⁰

The mystery of knowledge

The healing and purification of the organs of human knowledge are brought about by the common action of God and man — by the grace of God and the will of man. On the long path of purification and healing, knowledge itself becomes purer and healthier. At every stage of its development, knowledge depends on the ontological structure and the ethical state of its organs. Purified and healed by a man's striving in the evangelical virtues, the organs of knowledge themselves acquire holiness and purity. A pure heart and pure mind engender pure knowledge. The organs of knowl-

147. Log. 58, p. 239; 148. Log. 16, p. 57; 149. Id; 150. Log. 34, p. 150.

edge, when purified, healed, and turned towards God, give a pure and healthy knowledge of God and, when turned towards creation, give a pure and healthy knowledge of creation.

According to the teaching of St. Isaac the Syrian, there are two sorts of knowledge: that which precedes faith and that which is born of faith. The former is natural knowledge and involves the discernment of good and evil. The latter is spiritual knowledge and is "the perception of the mysteries," "the perception of what is hidden," "the contemplation of the invisible."¹⁵¹

There are also two sorts of faith: the first comes through hearing and is confirmed and proven by the second, "the faith of contemplation," "the faith that is based on what has been seen."¹⁵² In order to acquire spiritual knowledge, a man must first be freed from natural knowledge.¹⁵³ This is the work of faith. It is by the asceticism of faith that there comes to man that "unknown power"¹⁵⁴ that makes him capable of spiritual knowledge. If a man allows himself to be caught in the web of natural knowledge, it is more difficult for him to free himself from it than to cast off iron bonds, and his life is lived "against the edge of a sword."¹⁵⁵

When a man begins to follow the path of faith, he must lay aside once and for all his old methods of knowing, for faith has its own methods. Then natural knowledge ceases and spiritual knowledge takes its place. Natural knowledge is contrary to faith, for faith, and all that comes from faith, is "the destruction of the laws of knowledge"—though not of spiritual, but of natural knowledge.¹⁵⁶

151. Log. 18, pp. 64–5; 152. *ibid*; 153. Log. 19, p. 69; 154. *ibid*; 155. *id.* p. 71; 156. Log. 62, p. 250.

The chief characteristic of natural knowledge is its approach by examination and experimentation. This is in itself "a sign of uncertainty about the truth." Faith, on the contrary, follows a pure and simply way of thought that is far removed from all guile and methodical examination. These two paths lead in opposite directions. The house of faith is "childlike thoughts and simplicity of heart," for it is said: "Glorify God in simplicity of heart" (Col. 3: 22), and: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matth. 18: 3). Natural knowledge stands opposed both to simplicity of heart and simplicity of thought. This knowledge only works within the limits of nature, "but faith has its own path beyond nature."

The more a man devotes himself to the ways of natural knowledge, the more he is seized on by fear and the less can he free himself from it. But if he follows faith, he is immediately freed and "as a son of God, has the power to make free use of all things." "The man who loves this faith acts like God in the use of all created things," for to faith is given the power "to be like God in making a new creation." Thus it is written: "Thou desiredst, and all things are presented before thee." (cf. Job 23: 13 LXX) Faith can often "bring forth all things out of nothing," while knowledge can do nothing "without the help of matter." Knowledge has no power over nature, but faith has such power. Armed with faith, men have entered into the fire and quenched the flames, being untouched by them. Others have walked on the waters as on dry land. All these things are "beyond nature"; they go against the modes of natural knowledge and reveal the vanity of such modes. Faith "moves about above nature." The ways of natural knowledge ruled the

world for more than 5,000 years, and man was unable to "lift his gaze from the earth and understand the might of his Creator" until "our faith arose and delivered us from the shadows of the works of this world" and from a fragmented mind. He who has faith "will lack nothing," and, when he has nothing, "he possesses all things by faith," as it is written: "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matth. 21: 22); and also: "The Lord is near; be anxious for nothing." (Phil. 4: 6)¹⁵⁷

Natural laws do not exist for faith. St. Isaac emphasizes this very strongly: "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9: 23), for with God nothing is impossible.¹⁵⁸ Natural knowledge constrains its disciples from "drawing near to that which is alien to nature," to that which is above nature.¹⁵⁹

This natural knowledge to which St. Isaac refers appears in modern philosophy under three headings: realism based on the senses, epistemological criticism, and monism. These three approaches all limit the power, reality, force, worth, criteria, and extent of knowledge to within the bounds of visible nature — to the extent that these coincide with the limits of the human senses as organs of knowledge. To step beyond the limits of nature and to enter into the realm of the supernatural is considered to be against nature, as something irrational and impossible, forbidden to the followers of the three philosophical paths in question. Directly or indirectly, man is limited to his senses and dare not pass beyond them.

Nevertheless, this natural knowledge, according to St. Isaac, is not at fault. It is not to be rejected. It is just that

157. *id.* pp. 250, 251–2; 158. *id.* p. 253; 159. *ibid.*

faith is higher than it is. This knowledge is only to be condemned in so far as, by the different means it uses, it turns against faith. But when this knowledge "is joined with faith, becoming one with her, clothing itself in her burning thoughts," when it "acquires wings of passionlessness," then, using other means than natural ones, it rises up from the earth "into the realm of its Creator," into the supernatural. This knowledge is then fulfilled by faith and receives the power to "rise to the heights," to perceive him who is beyond all perception and to "see the brightness that is incomprehensible to the mind and knowledge of created beings." Knowledge is the level from which a man rises up to the heights of faith. When he reaches these heights, he has no more need of it, for it is written: "We know in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (1 Cor. 13: 9–10) Faith reveals to us now the truth of perfection, as if it were before our eyes. It is by faith that we learn that which is beyond our grasp — by faith and not by enquiry and the power of knowledge.¹⁶⁰

The works of righteousness are: fasting, almsgiving, vigils, purity of body, love of one's neighbor, humbleness of heart, the forgiveness of sins, pondering on heavenly good things, study of the mysteries of Holy Scripture, the engagement of the mind in the higher works — these and all the other virtues are steps by which the soul rises to the highest realms of faith.¹⁶¹

There are three spiritual modes in which knowledge rises and falls, and by which it moves and changes. These are the body, the soul, and the spirit. Although

160. *id.* p. 25; 161. *id.* pp. 254–5.

knowledge is a single whole by its nature, it changes the way and form of its action in relation to each of these three. "Knowledge is a gift of God to the nature of rational beings, given to them at the beginning, at their creation. It is naturally simple and undivided, like the light from the sun, but in its function in relation to the body, the soul, and the spirit it changes and becomes divided."¹⁶²

At its lowest level, knowledge "follows the desires of the flesh," concerning itself with riches, vainglory, dress, repose of body, and the search for rational wisdom. This knowledge invents the arts and sciences and all that adorns the body in this visible world. But in all this, such knowledge is contrary to faith. It is known as "mere knowledge, for it is deprived of all thought of the divine and, by its fleshly character, brings to the mind an irrational weakness, because in it the mind is overcome by the body and its entire concern is for the things of this world." It is puffed up and filled with pride, for it refers every good work to itself and not to God. That which the Apostle said, "knowledge puffeth up," (1 Cor. 8: 1), was obviously said of this knowledge, which is not linked with faith and hope in God and not of true knowledge. True, spiritual knowledge, linked with humility, brings to perfection the soul of those who have acquired it, as is seen in Moses, David, Isaiah, Peter, Paul, and all those who, within the limits of human nature, were counted worthy of this perfect knowledge. "With them, knowledge is always immersed in pondering things strange to this world, in divine revelations and lofty contemplation of spiritual things

162. *id.* p. 255.

and ineffable mysteries. In their eyes, their own souls are but dust and ashes." Knowledge that comes of the flesh is criticized by Christians, who see it as opposed not only to faith but to every act of virtue.¹⁶³

It is not difficult to see that in this first and lowest degree of knowledge of which St. Isaac speaks is included virtually the whole of European philosophy, from naive realism to idealism — and all science from the atomism of Democritus to Einstein's relativity.

From the first and lowest degree of knowledge, man moves on to the second, when he begins both in body and soul to practice the virtues: fasting, prayer, almsgiving, the reading of Holy Scripture, the struggle with the passions, and so forth. Every good work, every goodly disposition of the soul in this second degree of knowledge, is begun and performed by the Holy Spirit through the working of this particular knowledge. The heart is shown the paths that lead to faith, even though this knowledge remains "bodily and composite."¹⁶⁴

The third degree of knowledge is that of perfection. "When knowledge rises up above the earth and the care for earthly things and begins to examine its own interior and hidden thoughts, scorning that from which the evil of the passions springs and rising up to follow the way of faith in concern for the life to come. . . and in the seeking out of hidden mysteries — then faith takes this knowledge into itself and absorbs it, returning and giving birth to it from the beginning, so as to become itself 'from the beginning,' so as to become itself wholly spirit." Then it can "take wing and fly to the realm of incorporeal spirits and plumb the depths of the fathom-

163. *Log.* 63, pp. 256-258; 164. *Log.* 64, p. 258.

less ocean, pondering on the divine and wondrous things that govern the nature of spiritual and physical beings and penetrating the spiritual mysteries that can only be grasped by a simple and supple mind. Then the inner senses awaken to the work of the spirit in those things that belong to that other realm, immortal and incorruptible. This knowledge has, in a hidden way, here in this world, received already spiritual resurrection so as to bear true witness to the renewal of all things.¹⁶⁵

These, according to St. Isaac, are the three degrees of knowledge with which the whole of man's life is linked in body, soul, and spirit. From the moment that he "begins to discern between good and evil to the moment of his leaving this world," the soul's knowledge is composed of one or all of these three degrees.¹⁶⁶

The first degree of knowledge "cools the soul's ardor for endeavors on God's path." The second "rekindles it for the swift path that leads to faith." The third is a "rest from toil," when the mind "feasts on the mysteries of the life to come." "But, as nature cannot as yet wholly rise to the level of deathlessness and overcome the weight of the flesh and perfect itself in spiritual knowledge, not even this third degree of knowledge is able to move towards total perfection, so as to live in the world of death and yet leave behind completely fleshly nature." While a man is in the flesh, therefore, he passes from one degree of knowledge to another. He has the help of grace, but is hindered by the demons, "for he is not totally free in this imperfect world." Every work of knowledge consists in "effort and constant practice," but

165. Log. 65, pp. 259-60; 166. id. p. 260.

the work of faith "does not consist in acts," but in spiritual thoughts and in purity of soul, and this is above the senses. For faith is subtler than knowledge, as knowledge is subtler than the senses. All the saints who attained to such a life "abide by faith in the delights of a life above nature." This faith is born in the soul through the light of grace which, "by the testimony of the mind, sustains the heart that it may not be uncertain in hope — in a hope that is far removed from all presumption." This faith has "spiritual eyes" which perceive "the mysteries hidden in the soul, hidden riches that are concealed from the eyes of sons of the flesh" but are revealed by the Holy Spirit, who is received by the disciples of Christ (*cf.* John 14: 15-17). The Holy Spirit is "the holy power" that abides within a man of Christ, preserving and defending his soul and body from evil. This invisible power is perceived with the eyes of faith by those whose minds are enlightened and sanctified. It is known to the saints "through experience."¹⁶⁷

To explain yet more clearly the mystery of knowledge, St. Isaac presents further definitions of both knowledge and faith. "The knowledge that is concerned with the visible and sensual is called natural; the knowledge that is concerned with the spiritual and incorporeal is called spiritual, for it receives its perception through the spirit, and not through the senses. The knowledge that comes by divine power, however, is known as supernatural. It is unknowable and is higher than knowledge." "The soul does not receive this contemplation from the matter that is outside it," as is the case with the first two kinds of knowledge, "but it

167. id. pp. 260-62.

comes unexpectedly by itself as an immaterial gift contained within itself, according to the words of Christ: "The kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17: 21). There is no point awaiting its appearance in some outward form, for it does not come "with observation." (Luke 17: 20)."

The first knowledge comes "from continual study and the desire to learn. The second comes from a proper way of life and a clearly held faith. The third comes from faith alone, for in it knowledge is done away, activity ceases, and the senses become superfluous."¹⁶⁸ For the mysteries of the Spirit, "which are beyond knowledge and are not apprehended either by the bodily senses nor the rational powers of the mind, God has given us a faith by which we know only that these mysteries exist." The Savior calls the coming of the Comforter "the gifts of the revelation of the mysteries of the Spirit," (cf. John 14: 16, 26) and it is therefore seen that the perfection of spiritual knowledge consists "in the receiving of the Spirit, as did the apostles." "Faith is the gateway to the mysteries. As bodily eyes see material things, so faith looks with spiritual eyes on that which is hidden." When a man passes through the gate of faith, God leads him into "the spiritual mysteries and opens the sea of faith to his understanding."¹⁶⁹

All the virtues have a role to play in this spiritual knowledge, for it is the fruit of the practice of the virtues.¹⁷⁰ Faith "engenders the fear of God," and from this fear of God follow repentance and the practice of the virtues, which itself gives birth to spiritual knowledge.¹⁷¹ This knowledge, "coming from long experience

168. Log. 66, pp. 262-3; 169. Log. 72, p. 281; 170. Log. 44, p. 183; 171. Log. 18, p. 65.

and practice of the virtues, is pleasant" and gives a man great power.¹⁷² The first and chief basis of spiritual knowledge is a healthy soul, a healthy organ of knowledge. "Knowledge is the fruit of a healthy soul," while a healthy soul is the result of long practice of the evangelical virtues.¹⁷³ The "healthy of soul" are the perfect, and it is to them that knowledge is given.¹⁷⁴

It is very difficult, and often impossible, to express in words the mystery and nature of knowledge. In the realm of human thought, there is no ready definition that can explain it completely. St. Isaac therefore gives many different definitions of knowledge. He is continually exercised in this matter, and the problem stands like a burning question mark before the eyes of this holy ascetic. The saint presents answers from his rich and blessed experience, achieved through long and hard asceticism. But the most profound, and to my mind the most exhaustive answer that man can give to this question is that given by St. Isaac in the form of a dialogue:

"Question: What is knowledge?

"Answer: The perception of eternal life.

"Question: And what is eternal life?

"Answer: To perceive all things in God. For love comes through understanding, and the knowledge of God is ruler over all desires. To the heart that receives this knowledge every delight that exists on earth is superfluous, for there is nothing that can compare with the delight of the knowledge of God."¹⁷⁵

Knowledge is therefore victory over death, the linking of this life with immortal life and the uniting of man

172. Log. 48, p. 198; 173. Log. 38, p. 164; 174. Log. 44, p. 185; 175. Log. 38, p. 164.

with God. The very act of knowledge touches on the immortal, for it is by knowledge that man passes beyond the limits of the subjective and enters the realm of the trans-subjective. And when the trans-subjective object is God, then the mystery of knowledge becomes the mystery of mysteries and the enigma of enigmas. Such knowledge is a mystical fabric woven on the loom of the soul by the man who is united with God.

For human knowledge the most vital problem is that of truth. Knowledge bears within itself an irresistible pull towards the infinite mystery, and this hunger for truth that is instinctive to human knowledge is never satisfied until eternal and absolute Truth itself becomes the substance of human knowledge — until knowledge, in its own self-perception, acquires the perception of God, and in its own self-knowledge comes to the knowledge of God. But this is given to man only by Christ, the God-Man, he who is the only incarnation and personification of eternal truth in the world of human realities. When a man has received the God-Man into himself, as the soul of his soul and the life of his life, then that man is constantly filled with the knowledge of eternal truth.

What is truth? St. Isaac answers thus: "Truth is the perception of things that is given by God."¹⁷⁶ In other words: the perception of God is truth. If this perception exists in a man, he both has and knows the truth. If he does not have this perception, then truth does not exist for him. Such a man may always be seeking truth, but he will never find it until he comes to the perception of God, in which lie both the perception and knowledge of truth.

176. Log. 69, p. 272.

It is the man who restores and transforms his organs of knowledge by the practice of the virtues that comes to the perception and knowledge of the truth. For him faith and knowledge, and all that goes with them, are one indivisible and organic whole. They fulfill and are fulfilled by one another, and each confirms and supports the other. "The light of the mind gives birth to faith," says St. Isaac, "and faith gives birth to the consolation of hope, while hope fortifies the heart. Faith is the enlightenment of the understanding. When the understanding is darkened, then faith hides itself and fear holds sway, cutting off hope. Faith, which bathes the understanding in light, frees man from pride and doubt, and is known as 'the knowledge and manifestation of the truth.'"¹⁷⁷

Holy knowledge comes from a holy life, but pride darkens that holy knowledge.¹⁷⁸ The light of truth increases and decreases according to a man's way of life.¹⁷⁹ Terrible temptations fall upon those who seek to live a spiritual life. The ascetic of faith must therefore pass through great sufferings and misfortunes in order to come to knowledge of the truth.¹⁸⁰

A troubled mind and chaotic thoughts are the fruit of a disordered life, and these darken the soul.¹⁸¹ When the passions are driven from the soul with the help of the virtues, when "the curtain of the passions is drawn back from the eyes of the mind," then the intellect can perceive the glory of the other world.¹⁸² The soul grows by means of the virtues, the mind is confirmed in the truth and becomes unshakable, "girded for encountering

177. Log. 58, p. 240; 178. Log. 61, p. 249; 179. Log. 84, p. 323; 180. Log. 57, p. 233; 181. Log. 78, p. 299; 182. Log. 19, p. 62; Letter 4, p. 382.

and slaying every passion."¹⁸³ Freedom from the passions is brought about by the crucifying of both the intellect and the flesh. This makes a man capable of contemplating God. The intellect is crucified when unclean thoughts are driven out of it, and the body when the passions are uprooted.¹⁸⁴ "A body given over to pleasure cannot be the abode of the knowledge of God."¹⁸⁵

True knowledge — "the revelation of the mysteries" — is attained by means of the virtues,¹⁸⁶ and this is "the knowledge that saves."¹⁸⁷ The chief characteristic — and "proof" — of this knowledge is humility.¹⁸⁸ When the intellect "abides in the realm of knowledge of the truth," then all questioning ceases,¹⁸⁹ and a great calm and peace descend upon it. This peace of mind is called "perfect health."¹⁹⁰ When the power of the Holy Spirit enters into the soul, then the soul "learns through the Spirit."¹⁹¹

In the philosophy of St. Isaac, the problem of the nature of knowledge becomes an ontological and ethical problem which, in the last resort, is seen to be the problem of human personality. The nature and character of knowledge depend ontologically, morally, and gnoseologically on the constitution of the human person, and especially on the constitution and state of its organs of knowledge. In the person of the ascetic of faith, knowledge, of its very nature, turns into contemplation.

183. Log. 83, p. 318; cf. Log. 85, p. 335. 184. Log. 30, p. 130; 185. Log. 56, p. 226; 186. Log. 37, p. 161; 187. Log. 5, p. 19; 188. Log. 5, p. 31; 189. Letter 4, p. 383; 190. Log. 58, p. 234; 191. Log. 56, p. 227. (1935)

Contemplation

*I*n the philosophy of the holy fathers, contemplation has an ontological, ethical, and gnoseological significance. It means prayerful concentration of the soul, through the action of grace, on the mysteries that surpass our understanding and are abundantly present not only in the Holy Trinity but in the person of man himself and in the whole of God's creation. In contemplation, the person of the ascetic of faith lives above the senses, above the categories of time and space. He has a vivid awareness of the links that bind him to the higher world and is nourished by revelations that contain that which "eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." (1 Cor. 2: 9)

St. Isaac strives to put into words his great experience, gained through the grace that brought him to contemplation. As far as human language permits the grasping and translation of the truths of religious experience, he seeks to explain as clearly as possible what contemplation is. According to him, contemplation is the sense of divine mysteries hidden within things and events.¹⁹² Contemplation is found in the finest workings of the mind and in continual pondering on God. Its abode is unceasing prayer,¹⁹³ and thus it illumines the spiritual part of the soul, the intellect.¹⁹⁴

"Sometimes contemplation springs from prayer, silencing the prayer of the lips. Then the man at prayer becomes through contemplation a body without breath, outside himself. This state is known as the contempla-

192. Log. 30, p. 131; 193. id. p. 129; 194. id. p. 130.

tion of prayer." "In this prayerful contemplation there exist various degrees and a diversity of gifts," for "the mind has not yet passed" into that realm where there is no longer prayer (where "prayer does not exist"), for in that realm there is something greater than prayer.¹⁹⁵

By the help of a good life lived in grace, the ascetic of faith ascends to contemplation. "To begin with he becomes confident in God's providence towards men and is illumined by love towards his Creator and marvels at his care for the rational beings that he has made. After this there arises in him the sweetness of God and a burning love for God in his heart, a love that burns away the passions of both soul and body." He is then "drunk with the wine of divine love. . . and his thoughts are drawn beyond themselves and his heart led captive after God." "It seems to him at times that he is not in the body or even in this world. Such is the beginning of spiritual contemplation in a man — of contemplation and at the same time of all revelation to the mind." The mind "grows" with the help of contemplation and rises up to revelations "that are beyond human nature." In brief: in contemplation "there are brought to man all the divine contemplations and spiritual revelations that the saints receive in this world, and all the gifts and revelations that nature itself is capable of knowing in this world."¹⁹⁶

The virtue of understanding "humbles the soul and purifies it from clouded thoughts, that it may not loiter among the passions but press forward to contemplation." This contemplation brings the mind close to its primal nature and is called "immaterial contemplation."

195. Log. 31, p. 134; 196. Log. 40, pp. 169 and 170.

It is a "spiritual virtue," for "it lifts the soul up above the earth, bringing it close to the primal contemplation of the Spirit, introducing the mind to God and to the contemplation of his ineffable glory, . . . holding the mind apart from this world and the perception of it."¹⁹⁷ The life of the Spirit is an activity in which the senses have no part. The holy fathers wrote about this: "As soon as the intellects of the saints have made this life their own, material contemplation and the opacity of the flesh fall back, and spiritual contemplation takes their place."¹⁹⁸

"The modalities of prayer" are manifold, says St. Isaac, but they all have one aim: pure prayer. In the depths of this pure prayer there lies a rapture that is not prayer, for everything that can be called prayer ceases, and there remains a contemplation in which the mind cannot utter prayers." "Prayer is one thing, but this contemplation-in-prayer is another, although one flows from the other. Prayer is the sowing and contemplation the gathering-in of the sheaves, in which the harvester stands amazed at the wondrous abundance of the full ears that have grown from the poor little grains he has sown." In this state of contemplation, the intellect passes beyond its own limits and enters "that other world."¹⁹⁹

Transformed by prayer and other ascetic practices, the mind becomes purified and learns "to contemplate God with divine and not human eyes."²⁰⁰ He who guards his heart from the passions contemplates God at every instant. He who maintains a constant vigilance over his soul. . . "at every hour contemplates the Lord." "He who watches over his own soul at every hour will see his heart rejoice in revelations. He who draws the contem-

197. Log. 17, p. 59; 198. id. p. 61; 199. Log. 32, p. 135. 200. Log. 35, p. 154.

plation of his intellect within himself will contemplate the dawn of the Spirit. He who recoils from the diffusion of his mind will contemplate the Lord in the inner recesses of his heart. . . Behold, heaven is within you, if you are pure, and you will see the angels in their radiance and, with them and within them, their Lord himself. . . The soul of a righteous man shines more brightly than the sun and rejoices at every hour in the contemplation of things revealed."²⁰¹

When, after the strict asceticism of the Gospel, a man finds within himself the divine center of his being — and finds there also the center of the transcendent divinity in this visible world — then he rises above time and beholds himself as from eternity. He sees himself as above time and space, deathless and eternal. At its root true self-knowledge is also true knowledge of God, for man carries the shortest path between himself and God in the God-like nature of his own soul. Here lies the shortest distance between man and God. All of man's paths towards God may well meet a dead end; only this one leads surely to God in Christ. In his philosophy, St. Isaac lays great emphasis on self-knowledge. "He who has been counted worthy to see himself," he says, "is greater than he who has been counted worthy to see the angels."²⁰²

To acquire the capacity to see into his own soul, a man must first open his heart to grace.²⁰³ "To the extent that souls are impure or darkened they can neither see themselves nor others." Insight will come "if a man purifies his soul and brings it back to its primal state."²⁰⁴

201. Log. 43, p. 176; 202. Log. 34, p. 153; 203. Log. 73, p. 291; 204. Log. 67, p. 265.

"He who desires to see God within himself must strive by constant recollection of God to purify his heart; and thus, with the light from the eyes of his mind, he will see God at every hour. As it is with a fish out of water, so it is with an intellect that has turned aside from the recollection of God. . . For the man with a pure mind, the realm of the Spirit is within himself; the sun that shines within him is the light of the Holy Trinity and the air breathed by the inhabitants of this realm is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. . . Their life, their joy, and their gladness is Christ, the radiance of the Father's light. Such a man is always gladdened at the contemplation of his soul, marvelling at its beauty that is indeed brighter than a thousand suns. This is Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God, hidden, as the Lord says (Luke 17: 21), within us. This realm is the cloud of God's glory into which only the pure of heart may enter to behold the face of their Master and to fill their intellects with the radiance of his light. . . A man cannot see the beauty that is within himself until he has discounted and despised all the beauty that is outside him. . . A man who is healthy of soul, who is humble and meek — such a man — as soon as he turns to prayer, sees the light of the Holy Spirit within his soul and rejoices at beholding the rays of his light, delighting in the contemplation of its glory."²⁰⁵

A man can understand the nature of his soul by the light of the Holy Spirit. "By nature the soul is free of the passions. When, in Holy Scripture, passions of the soul and of the flesh are spoken of, this refers to their causes, for the soul is by nature passionless. This is not accepted by the adherents of profane philosophy" — or, as we

205. Log. 43, pp. 177-8.

would say today, the adherents of materialist, realist, and phenomenalist philosophy. On the contrary, God created the soul in his image, and therefore passionless.²⁰⁶

There exist three states of soul: natural, unnatural, and supernatural. "The natural state of the soul is the knowledge of God's creation, both visible and spiritual. The supernatural state of the soul is the contemplation of the super-essential Divinity. The unnatural state of the soul is its involvement in the passions," for the passions do not belong to its nature.²⁰⁷ Passion is an unnatural state of the soul, but virtue is its natural state.²⁰⁸ When the mind is fed by the virtues, especially that of compassion, the soul is then "adorned with that holy beauty" through which man is indeed in the likeness of God.²⁰⁹ The "holy beauty" of man's being is revealed in a pure heart, and the more a man develops this holy beauty within himself, the more will he see the beauty of God's creation.²¹⁰

This shows that self-knowledge is the best way to come to a true knowledge of nature and the material world in general. "He who submits himself to God," says St. Isaac, "is close to being able to submit all things to himself. To him who knows himself is given to know all things, for knowledge of self is the fullness of the knowledge of all things."²¹¹ If a man humbles himself before God, all creation humbles itself before him. "True humility is born of knowledge, and true knowledge is the fruit of temptation"²¹² — that is, it comes through the battle with temptations.

206. Log. 82, p. 314; 207. Log. 83, p. 316; 208. id. p. 317; 209. Log. 1, p. 6; 210. Letter 3, p. 366; 211. Log. 16, p. 58; 212. id. p. 59; cf. Log. 44, p. 186.

Human nature is capable of true contemplation when it is cleansed from the passions by the exercise of the virtues. The true contemplation of the material and immaterial world, and of the Holy Trinity itself, is the gift of Christ. He revealed this contemplation to men and instructed them in it, "when he, in his own divine person, completed the renewal of human nature and, through his life-giving commandments, cleared a path to the truth. Human nature only becomes capable of true contemplation when a man first puts off the old Adam through enduring the passions, through fulfilling the commandments and by suffering misfortune. . . In these circumstances the intellect becomes capable of spiritual birth and of the contemplation of the spiritual world, its true fatherland. . . The contemplation of the new world revealed by the Spirit, in which the intellect takes spiritual delight, occurs under the action of grace. . . This contemplation becomes a food that nourishes the intellect, preparing it to receive a contemplation that is yet more perfect. For one contemplation leads into another, until the intellect is brought into the realm of perfect love. Love itself is the abode, the "place" of spiritual man; it dwells in purity of soul. When the intellect reaches the realm of love, grace works in it and the intellect receives spiritual contemplation and becomes a beholder of hidden things."²¹³

Mystical contemplation "is revealed to the intellect when the soul has been made whole."²¹⁴ Those who have cleansed their souls by the practice of the virtues become worthy of spiritual contemplation.²¹⁵ "Purity sees God."²¹⁶ Those who have cleansed themselves from sin

213. Letter 4, p. 389; 214. id. p. 383; 215. id. p. 370; 216. id. p. 383.

and unceasingly ponder on God behold him.²¹⁷ "The kingdom of heaven is called spiritual contemplation, for this is what it is," says St. Isaac. "It is not found through the activity of thought, but can be tasted by grace. Until a man cleanses himself he is in no state even to hear of the Kingdom, for no one can acquire it through teaching," only through purity of heart.²¹⁸ God gives pure thoughts to those who live pure lives.²¹⁹ "Purity of thought springs from striving and from guarding the heart, and from purity of thought comes the enlightenment of the understanding. From there grace leads the intellect to the realm where the senses have no power, where they neither instruct nor are instructed."²²⁰

By vigilance in prayer "the mind takes wing and flies upwards," "towards the delights of God." "It swims in a knowledge that surpasses human thought." "The soul that strives to persevere in this vigilance receives the eyes of the cherubim with which to dwell in constant, heavenly contemplation."²²¹ The soul of man sees the truth of God through the power of his way of life, that is, through the life of faith. "If his contemplation is true, he will find the light and what he contemplates will be in the realm of truth."²²² "The vision of God comes from the knowledge of God, and cannot precede this knowledge."²²³

The goal of a Christian is life in and contemplation of the Holy Trinity. According to St. Isaac, love is "the primal contemplation of the Holy Trinity." "The first of the mysteries is called purity and is attained through the

217. cf. Log. 5, p. 26 and Log. 43, p. 177; 218. Log. 19, p. 70; cf. Log. 35, p. 154; 219. Log. 25, p. 105; 220. Log. 30, p. 131; 221. Log. 29, p. 125; cf. p. 124 and Letter 4, p. 364; 222. Letter 4, p. 388; 223. Log. 16, p. 58.

performance of the commandments. But contemplation is the spiritual contemplation of the intellect." It comes from "the mind's entering into rapture and understanding both that which was and that which will be. Contemplation is the vision of the intellect. In it the heart is chastened, renewed, and cleansed of evil, becoming familiar with the mysteries of the Spirit and the revelations of knowledge, rising from knowledge to knowledge, from contemplation to contemplation, and from understanding to understanding, learning and growing secretly until it is caught up into love, incorporated into hope, until joy takes up residence in its inmost parts, until it is lifted up to God and crowned with the natural glory of its own created being." Thus the mind "is purified and endowed with mercy, actually being counted worthy to contemplate the Holy Trinity."²²⁴ For there are three sorts of natural contemplation in which the mind "is uplifted, active, and engaged": "two are of the created world — of the rational and the non-rational, the spiritual and the bodily; and the third is the contemplation of the Holy Trinity."²²⁵

If the ascetic of faith, enriched by the unspeakable riches of contemplation, turns towards creation, his whole being is filled with love and compassion. "He loves the sinner," says St. Isaac, "while loathing his works."²²⁶ He is woven through with humility and mercy, with repentance and love. He has a heart filled with love for every creature. "What is a merciful heart?" "It is," St. Isaac replies, "a heart burning with love towards the whole of creation: towards men, birds, animals, demons, and every creature. His eyes overflow

224. Letter 4, p. 387; 225. id. p. 384; 226. Log. 5, p. 30.

with tears at the thought and sight of them. From the great and powerful sorrow that constrains his heart and from his great patience, his heart contracts and he cannot bear to hear or see the least harm done to or misfortune suffered by creation. Therefore, he also prays with tears incessantly for irrational beasts, for opponents of the truth, and for those who do him harm, that they may be preserved and receive mercy. He also prays for the reptiles with great sorrow, a sorrow that is without measure in his heart and which likens him to God."²²⁷

When, by an evangelical asceticism, someone moves from the temporal to the eternal, when he lives in God and thinks in him, when he speaks "as of God" (2 Cor. 2: 17), when he looks on the world *sub specie Christi*, then the world is shown to him in its primordial beauty. With the gaze of a purified heart, he penetrates the crust of sin and sees the divinely made core of creation. The contemplation of the Holy Trinity, essentially mysterious and unknowable, is manifested by the ascetic of faith in this world of transient and limited realities through love and mercy, through meekness and humility, through prayer and toil for each and all, through rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep, through suffering with those who suffer and repenting with the penitent. His life in this world reflects his life in that other world of mysterious and invisible values. His thoughts and acts in this world have their roots in the other world, and it is from the other world that they draw their life-giving and wonder-working strength and power. If one were to trace any one of his thoughts, feelings, acts, or ascetic practices, one would be brought

227. Log. 81, p. 306.

to the Holy Trinity as the primary source of them all. All things come to him from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. We have the most beautiful example of this in St. Isaac himself, that great ascetic of the Holy Trinity who, with St. Simeon the New Theologian, was able, with the help of grace and ascetic experience, to give us the most convincing justification of the truth of the Triune Godhead and of the God-like trinity of man's personal being.

Conclusion

St. Isaac's theory of knowledge is dominated by the conviction that the problem of knowledge is fundamentally a religious and an ethical one. From its inception to its infinite fulfillment in grace, knowledge depends on the religious and ethical content and quality of the person, and above all on the religious and ethical culture and development of man's organs of knowledge. One thing is certain: that knowledge, on all levels, depends on man's religious and moral state. The more perfect a man is from the religious and moral standpoint, the more perfect is his knowledge. Man has been made in such a way that knowledge and morality are always balanced within him.

There is no doubt that knowledge progresses through man's virtues and regresses through the passions. Knowledge is like a fabric woven by the virtues on the loom of the human soul. The loom of the soul extends through all the visible and invisible worlds. The virtues are not only powers creating knowledge; they are the principles and source of knowledge. By transforming the

virtues into constituent elements of his being through ascetic endeavor, a man advances from knowledge to knowledge. It could even be possible to say that the virtues are the sense organs of knowledge. Advancing from one virtue to another, a man moves from one form of comprehension to another.

From the first virtue, faith, to the last, which is love for all, there extends one unbroken path: asceticism. On this long path a man forms, transforms, and transfigures himself through the grace of his ascetic endeavors. In this way he heals his being from the sicknesses of sin and ignorance, restoring the integrity of his person, unifying and making whole his spirit.

Healed and made whole by the religious and moral power of the virtues, a man gives expression to the purity and integrity of his person particularly through the purity and integrity of his knowledge. According to the evangelical, Orthodox understanding found in St. Isaac the Syrian, knowledge is an action, an ascesis, of the whole human person, and not of one part of his being — whether it be the intellect, the understanding, the will, the body, or the senses. In every act of knowledge, in every thought, feeling, and desire, the whole man is involved with his entire being.

Healed by the grace of ascetic endeavor, the organs of knowledge bring forth pure and healthy knowledge, the "sound (literally *healthy*) doctrine" of the Apostle (1 Tim. 1: 10; 2 Tim. 4: 3; Titus 1: 9; 2: 1). At all stages of its development this knowledge is "full of grace," for it is a product of the working together of man's voluntary ascesis and God's grace-filled power. The whole of man shares in it with the whole of God. For this reason St. Isaac speaks continually of the recollection, the "gathering in" of the soul, the mind, and the thoughts, a recol-

lection that is achieved by the practice of the evangelical virtues.

But these virtues differ from those of other religious and philosophical ethics, not only in their content but as in their method as well. The evangelical virtues have a specific content linking God and man and their own specific method of working. In his incomparably perfect divine-human, or "theanthropic," person the God-man Jesus Christ both showed and proved that this method, this divine-human way of life, is the only natural and normal way of life and of knowledge. The man who makes this way of faith his own also finds in it a way of knowledge. That which is valid for faith is valid also for the other godly virtues: love, hope, prayer, fasting, meekness, humility, and so forth; for each of these virtues becomes, in the man who lives in Christ, a living, creative force of life and knowledge.

In this theanthropic way of life and knowledge, there is nothing that is unreal, abstract, or hypothetical. Here all is real with an irresistible reality, for all is based on experience. In the person of Christ the God-man, transcendent, divine reality is shown forth and defined in an utterly empirical way. By his Incarnation Christ has given to human flesh the most subtle, the most transcendent, the most perfect reality. This reality has no bounds, for the person of Christ is limitless. It follows that human personality has no bounds, nor has men's knowledge, for it is said and commanded: "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matth. 5: 48) This means that the only bounds of human personality and knowledge are the limitless bounds of God.

The person of Christ the God-man presents in itself the perfect, ideal reality of theanthropic monism: a natural passage from God to man, from the supernatural

to the natural, from immortal life to human life. Such a passage is also natural for knowledge when, by the bridge of faith, hope, and love, it passes from man to God, from the natural to the supernatural, from the mortal to the immortal, and from the temporal to the eternal, thus revealing the organic unity of this life and the life to come, of this world and the other, of the natural and the supernatural.

This knowledge is an integral knowledge, for it rises on the wings of the divine and human virtues and passes without hindrance through the barriers of time and space, entering into the eternal. It is of this integral knowledge that St. Isaac is thinking when, in defining knowledge, he says that it is, "the perception of eternal life," and when, defining truth, he calls it, "the perception of God."

That which is true for the virtues is true also for knowledge. As each virtue begets other virtues, and begets knowledge, so each sort of knowledge begets another. One virtue produces another and sustains it, and the same is true of knowledge.

The more a man exercises himself in the virtues, the greater becomes his knowledge of God. The more he knows God, the greater is his asceticism. This is an empirical and pragmatic path. "If any man will do his [God's] will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God." (John 7: 17) In other words: it is by living the truth of Christ that one comes to know its veracity and uniqueness. This is truly an empirical, experimental, and pragmatic path. The knowledge of the truth is not given to the curious but to those who follow the ascetic way. Knowledge is a fruit on the tree of the virtues, which is the tree of life. Knowledge comes from asceticism. For the true Christian, Orthodox philosophy is in

fact the theanthropic ascesis of the intellect and of the whole person. Here, those arresting words of the Savior are especially significant: "Him who hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." (Luke 8: 18)

Looked at in the light of St. Isaac's theory of knowledge, naïve realism is both tragically and lethally simplistic. It can give no real knowledge of the world, for it makes use of sick and corrupt organs of knowledge. By contrast, theanthropic realism gives a real knowledge of the world and of the truth that lies therein, for it uses organs of knowledge that have been purified, healed, and renewed and can see into the very heart of all that is created.

Rationalism considers the understanding to be an infallible organ of knowledge. Therefore, in relationship with the whole human person, it appears as an anarchic apostate. It is like a branch that has cut itself off from the vine, which can have no full life or creative reality on its own. It is in no state to come to a knowledge of the truth, for in its egocentric isolation it is divided, scattered, and full of gaps. Truth, by contrast, is given to an intellect that has been purified, enlightened, transfigured and deified by the action of the virtues.

Philosophical criticism is almost exclusively occupied with the study of the organs of knowledge in their psychic and physical state as given in the merely human realm. To this it adds the study of the categories and conditions which are the premises of knowledge, but it pays no attention to the need for the healing and purification of the organs of knowledge. Therefore, philosophical criticism cannot by itself come to a knowledge of the truth, for it is nothing more than a cautious rationalism and sensualism.

Philosophical idealism is based on transcendental realities and criteria, but it is in no state to prove their existence. Founded on transcendental ideas, it is nevertheless unable to attain to the knowledge of the truth so necessary to human nature or to quench, even in part, the thirst for eternal truth and enduring realities.

These various *epistemological* systems are unable to give to man is given by Orthodox philosophy with its grace-filled, ascetic theory of knowledge. Here, eternal Truth Himself stands before human knowledge in the fullness of His infinite perfection, giving Himself to enlightened and grace-endowed man. For it is in the person of Christ the God-man that transcendental, divine truth comes to man. In Him truth becomes objectively immanent and presents an immediate and eternally vital historical reality. In order to make this his own, to make it a subjective immanence, it is essential that man, by the practice of the virtues, make the Lord Jesus Christ the soul of his soul, the heart of his heart, and the life of his life.

Translated by MOTHER MARIA (RULE)

HUMANISTIC ECUMENISM

Ecumenism is the common name for the pseudo-Christianity of the pseudo-Churches of Western Europe. Within it is the heart of European humanism, with Papism as its head. All of pseudo-Christianity, all of those pseudo-Churches, are nothing more than one heresy after another. Their common evangelical name is: Pan-heresy. Why? This is because through the course of history various heresies denied or deformed certain aspects of the God-man and Lord Jesus Christ; these European heresies remove Him altogether and put European man in His place. In this there is no essential difference between Papism, Protestantism, Ecumenism, and other heresies, whose name is "Legion."

Orthodox dogma, that is to say the overriding dogma of the Church, is rejected by them and replaced by the Latin heretical overriding dogma of the primacy and infallibility of the Pope, that is to say of man. From this pan-heresy heresies were born and continue to be born: the Filioque, the rejection of the invocation of the Holy Spirit, unleavened bread, the introduction of created grace, cleansing fire, superfluous works of the saints, mechanized teachings about salvation, and from this sprang mechanized teachings about life, Papocaesarism, the Inquisition, indulgences, the murder of sinners because of their sins, Jesuitism, the scholastics, the casuists, Monarchianism, and social individualism of different kinds . . .

Protestantism? It is the loyal child of Papism. It went from one heresy to another over the centuries because of its rationalistic scholasticism, and it is continually drowning in the various poisons of its heretical errors. In addition, Papal haughtiness and "infallible" foolishness reign absolutely within it, ruining the souls of its faithful. First of all each Protestant is an independent pope when it comes to matters of faith. This always leads from one spiritual death to another; and there is no end to this "dying" since a person can suffer countless spiritual deaths (in a lifetime).

Since this is the way things are, there is no way out of this impasse for the Papist-Protestantic Ecumenism with its pseudo-Church and its pseudo-Christianity without wholehearted repentance before the God-man Christ and His Orthodox Catholic Church. Repentance is the remedy for every sin, the medicine given to man by the only Friend of Man (Christ).

Without repentance and admittance into the True Church of Christ, it is unthinkable and unnatural to speak about unification of "the Churches," about the dialogue of love, about intercommunion (which is to say, the common cup). Most important of all, one must become "united in body" with the Theanthropic body of the Church of Christ, and through it commune with its soul, the Holy Spirit, and become an inheritor of the blessings of the God-man (Christ).

The contemporary "dialogue of love," which takes the form of naked sentimentality, is in reality a denial of the salutary sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth (2 Thess. 2: 13), that is to say the unique salutary "love of the truth." (Thess. 2: 10) The essence of love is truth; love lives and thrives as truth. Truth is the heart of each Godly virtue, and therefore of love as well. And each

one of these Godly virtues preaches and evangelizes about the God-man Lord Jesus as the only Person Who is the embodiment and image of Divine Truth, that is to say Pan-Truth. If truth were something other than the God-man, than Christ in other words, if it were thought, an idea, a theory, mind, science, philosophy, culture, man, humanity, the world, or all the worlds, or whoever or whatever or all it altogether, it would be minor, inadequate, finite, mortal. Truth, however, is a person, and yes, the person of the God-man Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity, and as such is immortal and not finite, but eternal. This is because in the Lord Jesus, Truth and Life are of the same essence: they are eternal Truth and eternal Life. (cf. John 14: 6; 1: 4. 17) He who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ grows unceasingly through His Truth into the divine infinity. He grows with all of his being, with all of his mind, with all of his heart and his soul. People live in Christ "speaking the truth in love," because only in this way "we must grow up in every way into Him Who is the head, into Christ. (Eph. 4: 15)

This is always realized "with all the saints." (Eph. 3: 18), always in the Church and through the Church, because a person cannot grow in Him "Who is the head" of the body of the Church, in other words in Christ, in any other way.

Let us not fool ourselves. There is also "the dialogue of falsehood," when those who discourse together consciously or unconsciously lie to one another. This kind of dialogue is customary when the "father of lies," the Devil, presides, "for he is a liar, and the father of lies." (John 8: 44) It is also usual for his unconscious and conscious co-workers to reach their "truth" with the help of falsehoods when they want to accomplish their good

through evil. There can be no "dialogue of love" without the dialogue of truth. Otherwise this dialogue is not true and is not natural. Accordingly the commandment of the Apostle asks that "love be genuine." (Rom. 12: 9)

The heretico-humanistic separation of and detachment of love from truth is a sign of the lack of theanthropic faith and of the loss of theanthropic balance and common sense. At any rate, this was never, nor is it the way of the Fathers. The Orthodox are rooted and founded only "with all of the saints" in truth, and have proclaimed in love this theanthropic life-saving love for the world and for all of the creation of God from the time of the Apostles until today. The naked moralistic, minimalistic, and humanistic pacifism of contemporary Ecumenists does only one thing: it brings to light their diseased humanistic roots, which is to say, their sick philosophy and feeble morality "according to the human tradition." (Col. 2: 8) They reveal the crisis of their humanistic faith, as well as their presumptuous insensibility for the history of the Church, which is to say, for its apostolic and catholic continuation in truth and in grace. And the holy, apostolic, patristic, God-mindedness, and common sense are proclaimed by the mouth of St. Maximos the Confessor in the following truth: "For faith is the foundation of the things that follow, I mean hope and love, which certainly sustain the truth." (P.G. 90c. 1189A)

The teaching of the Orthodox Church of the God-Man Christ, formulated the following about heretics through the Holy Apostles, the Holy Fathers, and the Holy Synods: heresies are not a Church, nor can they be a Church. Therefore, they cannot have Holy Mysteries, especially the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Sacraments. Precisely because the Holy Eucharist is

everything and all in the Church: even the God-Man Lord Jesus Christ and the Church itself and everything in general of the God-man.

Intercommunion, that is to say participating with heretics in the Holy Sacraments, and especially in the Holy Eucharist, is the most shameless betrayal of our Lord Jesus Christ, Judas' betrayal. It is especially the betrayal of the whole of the one and unique Church of Christ, of the Holy Tradition of the Church. One would have to rid oneself of one's Christ-like way of thinking and one's conscience before the various sacraments, before their holy meanings, and the holy commandments in order to do this.

First of all we would have to ask ourselves on what Ecclesiology and on what Theology of the Church is "intercommunion" based? This is because all of Orthodox Theology is not founded on or based on "inter-communion," but upon the theanthropic reality of communion, that is to say upon theanthropic Communion itself. (cf. 1 Cor. 1: 9; 10: 16-17; 2 Cor. 13: 13; Heb. 2: 14; 3: 14; John 1: 3) The idea of inter-communion is contradictory in itself and totally inconceivable for the Orthodox Catholic conscience.

The second fact, indeed a sacred fact of Orthodox faith, is the following: In Orthodox teaching about the Church and the Sacraments, the single most unique mystery is the Church itself, the Body of the God-man Christ, so that she is the only source and the content of all divine Sacraments. Outside of this theanthropic and inclusive Mystery of the Church, the Pan Mystery itself, there are no and cannot be any "mysteries"; therefore, there can be no inter-communion of Mysteries. Consequently we can only speak about Mysteries within the context of this unique Pan-Mystery which is the Church.

This is because the Orthodox Church, as the Body of Christ, is the source and the foundation of the Sacraments and not the other way around. The Mysteries, or Sacraments, cannot be elevated above the church, or examined outside the Body of the Church.

Because of this, in accordance with the mind of the Catholic Church of Christ, and in accordance with the whole of Orthodox Tradition, the Orthodox Church does not recognize the existence of other mysteries or sacraments outside of itself, neither does it recognize them as being mysteries, and one cannot receive the sacraments until one comes away from the heretical "Churches," that is to say the pseudo-Churches, through repentance to the Orthodox Church of Christ. Until then one remains outside the Church, un-united with it through repentance, and is as far as the Church is concerned, a heretic and consequently outside of the saving communion. This is because "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6: 14)

The first-most Apostle, with the authority he received from the God-Man gives us this commandment: "A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject [him]. (Titus 3: 10) How can the person who not only does not reject the "heretical person" but gives the Lord Himself to this one or that one through Holy Communion, how can he be a part of the Apostolic and theanthropic holy faith? Moreover, the beloved Disciple of the Lord Jesus, the Apostle of love, gives us this commandment: "do not receive in your house" (2 John 1: 10) the person who does not believe in the incarnation of Christ and does not accept the evangelical teaching about Him as God-Man.

The 45th Canon of the Apostles thunders: "Let any Bishop or Presbyter, or Deacon that merely joins in prayer with heretics be suspended, but if someone has permitted them to perform any service as Clergyman, let him be deposed." (cf. 33rd Canon of the Synod of Laodicea) Isn't this canon obvious? Even to a gnat?

The 65th Canon of the Apostles directs: "If a clergyman, or layman, enter a synagogue of the Jews, or heretics, to pray, let him be both deposed and excommunicated," and this is clear enough even for the most primitive mind.

The 46th Canon of the Holy Apostles says: "We command that any Bishop or Presbyter who accepts any heretic's baptism or sacrifice be deposed; for what accord does Christ have with Belial or what part has the believer with an infidel?" It is obvious even to a blind man that this commandment categorically directs us not to recognize any of the sacraments of the heretics and that we must consider them invalid and without divine grace.

St. John Damascene, the divinely inspired bearer of the apostolic and holy Patristic catholic Tradition of the Church of Christ, preaches from the heart that all of the holy Fathers, all of the holy Apostles, and all of the holy Synods of the Church taught the following theanthropic truth: "The bread and the wine is not a type of symbol of the body and blood of Christ (God forbid) but the actual body of the Lord itself. . .it is called Communion since we receive Christ's divinity through it." And truly it is this, for through it we commune with Christ and receive His body and divinity; through it we also commune with and are united to one another; for since we partake of the one bread, we all become one body of Christ and one blood, and members of one another, and

are accounted of the same body with Christ. Let us then make every effort to guard against receiving communion from heretics or giving it to them. "Give not that which is holy to dogs," says the Lord, "neither cast ye your pearls before swine," (Matt. 7: 6) lest we become sharers in their false teachings and their condemnation. If there is such a union with Christ and with each other, then we truly become united with all those with whom we commune, for this union comes from a deliberate choice and not without the intervention of our judgment. For we are all one body, because we partake of the one bread, as the divine Apostle says (1 Cor. 10: 17). (*St. John of Damascus: An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 4, 13 P.G. 94; c. 1149, 1152, 1153. Translated by Frederic H. Chase, Jr., *Saint John of Damascus Writings*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1958, 359, 360, 361.)

Theodore of Studion, the fearless confessor of theanthropic Orthodox truths proclaims to all the people of the world: "To receive Communion from a heretic or one who evidently corrupts it before a strange god makes one familiar with the Devil." (Theodore of Studion PG. c. 1668c) According to the same, the bread of the heretics is not "the body of Christ." (*ibid* c. 1597A) Consequently, "As the divine bread of the Orthodox is received, the participants became one body, in the same way heretical communion accomplishes the same thing for those who partake of it, making them one body that is against Christ." (*ibid* c. 1480 CD) In addition, communion from heretics is not the common bread, but poison which harms the body and darkens and blackens the soul. (*ibid*. c. 1189c)

Let us finish our journey into paradise and hell with the evangelical thoughts of a contemporary Orthodox

Bishop who is equal to the Apostles, the Chrysostom of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Nicholas of Achrida and Zitsa of blessed memory (+1956). Humbly and prayerfully we hope to elucidate on the problems about which we are speaking and shed light upon them in a holy patristic way with the evangelical light of his divinely-wise thoughts.

Being absorbed in the mysteries of the human race in a patristic way Bishop Nicholas preaches: The glorious Prophet Isaiah prophesied the following: "When the Lord shall arise to strike the earth terribly...the haughtiness of men shall be brought low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted on that day." (Is. 2: 10-11) And the Lord has risen up many times to strike the earth because people worshipped men instead of Him, the only God; because of haughty, living men who imposed themselves on others as gods. He arose in our days¹ and truly destroyed the whole earth in His just anger, in order to break human haughtiness and to humble the false high-mindedness of men.²

This kind of reaction of God against man often follows man's rebellion against God. The heretical people of our time gave Christ our Lord the last place at the table of this world, as though He is the least of

¹ This message by Bishop Nicholas was written during the Second World War, in fact, in a cell in Dachau in Germany. The message is published here for the first time and even though it carries on it the marks and circumstances in which it was written, it does not lose its value as an important piece of spiritual testimony.

² Nicholas died in exile from his homeland, seeing with pain and sorrow, that Christ had lost even the last place at its table. Its leaders had chosen "Europe" instead of Christ.

beggars, while they placed their own great men in the first seats: politicians, authors, mythmakers, scientists, capitalists, even tourists, and football players. The eyes of this people were fixed upon these great men, these modern gods, while only a few eyes were turned to Christ, the conqueror of death. This shameless rebellion of this baptized but heretical people against the most-high God had to be, of necessity, followed by a reaction of the scorned God against these lawless people and nations. And God has truly risen to destroy the earth. And the people of earth suffered unheard of sorrows before our eyes. Not only were these deified great men proven to be extinguished flames, from which no one seeks warmth any more, but were proof of the following words of the Prophet Isaiah, according to which people shall hide "in caves, and in the clefts of the rocks, and in the caverns of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and by reason of the glory of His might." (Is. 2: 19) And did not this happen in the last war? Did not people on the different continents go into the clefts of the rocks and into the caverns of the earth to save themselves from the European sowers of death, as happened in our country (Serbia) and elsewhere? And these sowers of death, are not they none other than those so-called glorious grantees, those idols of the people, who sat at the high places at the table of this world and scorned Christ as the beggar at the other end of the table...

The Christ-bearing Bishop preaches the following with sorrow and hope: Our baptized brothers, who were carried away by the Papal and Lutheran heresies, thought themselves to be wiser than Christ. They looked upon us Orthodox as ignorant and uncivilized people. But truly the words of Paul were also proven in them: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

(Rom. 1: 22) And this was so because they rejected the spiritual wisdom of Christ, Who walks with the garment of humility and love, and put on, according to the example of the pagan philosophers, carnal and worldly wisdom, which is filled with haughtiness and wickedness.

"And [they] changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man...and [they] worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator. (Rom. 1: 23, 25) In other words, they took all of the glory of Christ the Lord and put it over the shoulders of mortal men, which they then elevated as the new Messiahs. Such was their perception of glory, which they got from their godless wisdom. And the meaning of culture and of civilization was for them respect for the creature, which is to say visible nature, and worship of it rather than worship for the Creator; mortal gods and deified nature! For the present, this is the latest stop of Western humanity in its unrestrained and eternal descent from the heights of Christ to the depths of Satan. This is the climax of the equalization of people in the old idolatry of Rome and present day Asia. Thousands of books are written annually glorifying famous people and praising their civilizations, and thousands of newspapers serve this ephemeral and false glory daily, and they are found in the service of human works, praising them, in their exaggerated name which is called civilization. For this reason God delivered them up to shameful pleasure and passions, so that they could find satisfaction only in whatever is earthly and not heavenly, and only that which gives the devil gladness and laughter, while the angels of Christ lament. Their enjoyment is based on the pleasures of the flesh, in stealing from others, trampling upon the small

and weak, increasing the number of their earthly goods, and expanding their power and authority in the cunning conquests of foreign lands, in good times and in dance, in the rejection of every religion calling it superstition, in the denial of God, in the totally physical life, in the shameless recognition of the ape as the ancestor of man, in the submergence of anthropology into Zoology.

But you might ask: will it be possible for this generation, this most erring, deluded generation in the history of man, to return to honesty and the truth? Can it? Would that the Christ that they despise let this happen as soon as possible. But when will this be?

This is only going to happen when our Western brothers start writing books glorifying Christ our God, and when their thousands of newspapers print praises of Christian virtues and Christian good works, instead of writing about crimes and blasphemies against the Divine Majesty and about the commerce of vile instincts. When this transformation takes place, then Western heretical humanity shall be cleansed, and it shall smell sweetly of heavenly incense.

Then we Orthodox Christians will rejoice because we will receive our returning brothers.

And pagan people will love Christ and will ask to become His children because the Christian people will no longer hinder them from becoming Christ's children.

And wickedness will not exist among people, nor wars between the nations, but the peace of Christ, which is beyond the ability of the mind to comprehend, and His glory, of which there is no equal either in this age or in eternity.

The inspired Bishop confesses this theanthropic truth when he says: The supreme happiness of man is the appearance of God in the flesh; however the highest

calamity of man is also his apostasy from that same God and his return into the service of Satan. This misfortune has its origin in the non-Orthodox Western peoples, especially for these two reasons. The first is hatred for a heretical clergy, the second is hatred of the Jews. Both hatreds sprouted in the hearts of Western humanity from the same seed. And this seed is the effort of so many Christian clerics, as well as Jews, to completely dominate the life of the people and of the state in every area. The hatred of such a clergy was transformed into hatred for the Church, hatred for the Jews, which also includes a hatred for our Lord Jesus Who was a Jew. Indeed Christ was a Jew by virtue of His mother and the people to which He first appeared. However this people were the first to reject Him and killed Him via a horrible death. Then what? If someone is against the Jews, how then can he be against Christ, too? Against the One Whom the Jews fought against for two thousand years? But there is no logic where Satan drives his nails.

Instructed by their hatred of the clergy and of the Jews, Western people gradually rejected Christ, too, until they finally excluded Him from all of the sectors of the life and institutions of the people and the state and confined Him to only the churches. From Him Who said after His glorious resurrection from the grave: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth," (Matt. 28: 18) from Him these blind people took away all authority. But they did not only this, they took away every influence on earth as well, in schools, in the community, in politics, in the arts, in relations between people and nations ('and international relations'—literally), in science, in literature, and all of the rest.

God, however, cannot be mocked by all this. Whenever people, as guests become too impudent at the table of God, a warning has to come from the master of the house. Two terrible warnings have been given to today's generation, two world wars in a period of two decades. Let the Christian people kneel before Christ Whom they have insulted, and return to Him that authority, that honor and glory and respect which belongs only to Him. And you, too, my Orthodox brothers, must do this, too, if you want to save yourselves from the third world war, which will be far more horrible than the previous two.

The apostolic sorrow of the holy Bishop then asks: What is Europe?

It is the desire and the longing for power and pleasure and knowledge. All of which is human: firstly human desire and longing, and secondly human knowledge. And the two are personified by the Pope and Luther. What then is Europe? Europe is the Pope and Luther, human desire to the extreme and human knowledge to the extreme. The European Pope is the human desire for authority. The European Luther is the obstinate decision of man that everything must be explained by the mind, the Pope as the ruler of the world and the scientist as the sovereign of the world. This is Europe in a nutshell, ontologically and historically. The one means the surrender of mankind into the fire and the other means surrender of mankind into the water. And both mean: the separation of man from God because the one means the rejection of faith and the other the rejection of the Church of Christ. For the spirit of evil has been working in this way on the body of Europe for a few centuries now. And who can expel this evil spirit from Europe? No one, except the One Whose

name has been marked in red in the history of the human race as the only One Who expels demons from people. You already know Who I mean. I mean the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, and Savior of the world, Who was born of the Virgin, killed by the Jews, resurrected by God, witnessed by the centuries, justified by heaven, glorified by the Angels, confessed by the Saints, and accepted by our forefathers.

As long as Europe followed Christ as "the sun of righteousness," and His Apostles, Martyrs, Saints, and the countless righteous people and others who pleased Him, Europe was like a square that was illuminated by hundreds and thousands of candles, large and small, burning brightly. When human desire, however, and human wisdom struck as two strong winds, the candles were blown out and a darkness descended like the darkness of the subterranean passages in which moles live.

According to human desire, every nation and every person seeks power, pleasure, and glory, imitating the Pope of Rome. According to human wisdom, every nation and every person finds that he or she is wiser than everyone else and that he or she deserves all earthly things. How then can there not be wars between people and nations? How then can there not be foolishness and wildness in people? How then can there not be sicknesses and terrible diseases, drought and floods, insurrections and wars? For just as pus has to seep out of a pus-filled wound, and a stench has to come out of a place filled with filth, this has to happen.

Papism uses politics because this is the only way it can get power. Lutheranism uses philosophy and science because it believes that this is the only way to obtain wisdom. And so desire declared war against knowledge

and knowledge against desire. This is the new Tower of Babel, this is Europe. But in our time, however, there came a new generation of European, a generation that married desire to knowledge through atheism and rejected both the Pope and Luther. Now neither desire is hidden nor wisdom praised. Human desire and human wisdom are joined in our times and thus a marriage has taken place which is neither Roman Catholic nor Lutheran, but obviously and publicly satanic. Today's Europe is neither Papist nor Lutheran. It is above and outside of them both. It is totally earthly, without even the desire to ascend to heaven, either with the passport of the infallibility of the Pope or by the ladder of Protestant wisdom. It totally denies the journey from this world. It wants to stay here. It wants the grave as its cradle. It does not know about the other world. It doesn't smell the heavenly fragrance. It does not see the Angels and the Saints in its dreams. It does not want to hear about the Theotokos. Debauchery makes it hate virginity. The whole square which is Europe is sunk now in darkness. All of the candles are out. Oh! the awful darkness! Brother plunges the sword into his brother's breast, thinking that he is the enemy. Fathers reject their sons, sons their fathers. And the wolf is a far more loyal friend to man than man is.

Oh my brothers! Do you not see all this? Have you not felt the darkness and the wrongdoing of un-Christian Europe on your bodies? Do you prefer Europe to Christ, death to life? Moses offered these two choices to his people. And we also put these two choices before you. You have to know that Europe is death, Christ is life. Choose life and live forever.

And here is the shocking lament of the Bishop who is equal to the Apostles for Europe:

Oh my brothers! The 18th century is the father of the 19th century, and the 19th century is the father of the 20th. The father fell into great debt. And the son paid the debts of the father in full, but he became even more indebted, and his debt was passed on to the grandson. The father was ill with a very serious sickness, the son did not cure himself of this disgraceful sickness of the father, but allowed it to spread even further and so it was transmitted to the grandson three times stronger. The grandson is the 20th century, the century we are living in.

The 18th century signifies the rebellion of the Roman Pontiff against the Church and the clergy. The 19th century signifies the rebellion against God. The 20th signifies the alliance with the Devil. The debts have increased and the sickness has gotten worse. The Lord said that he will visit the sins of the fathers unto the third and fourth generations. Do you not see that the Lord is visiting upon the grandchildren the sins of its European fathers? Do you not see the whip upon the backs of the grandchildren because of the unpaid debts of the grandfathers?

The anti-Christ king is the beginning of the 19th century. The Pope, the anti-Christ, is the middle of the same century. The philosophers of Europe, the anti-Christ (from the lunatic asylum), are the end of that century: Napoleon Bonaparte, Pius, Nietzsche, the three fatal names of the three sickest people of hereditary sicknesses.

Are these the victors of the 19th century? No, they are the carriers of the dreaded sickness which was inherited from the 18th century. The sickest people, Caesar, the Pope, and the philosopher. . . and yes, not in idolatrous Rome but in the heart of baptized Europe! These are not

the winners but the losers. When Bonaparte laughed in front of the holy churches of the Kremlin, when Pius was declared infallible, and when Nietzsche publicly announced his worship of the anti-Christ, then the sun darkened in the sky. And if there were a thousand suns, they would all have been darkened for shame and sorrow because of this amazing thing that the world has never seen before: an atheist king, an atheist pontifex, and an atheist philosopher. In Nero's time at least the philosopher was not an atheist. However, the 18th century was the century of Pilate: he condemned Christ to death. The 19th century was the century of Caiaphas: he crucified Christ. The 20th century is the century of the council composed of the baptized and unbaptized Judases. This council declared that Christ was dead forever and that he was not resurrected. And then, if you can believe it my brothers, there came unheard of scourges upon European humanity, lashings unto the marrow of its bones, by insurrections and wars.

Who is the victor then, if it is not the kaiser, the pontifex, and the philosopher of the Europe that rejected Christianity? The winner is the Balkan peasant and the Russian moujik according to the word of Christ: "for the least among you is the greatest." (Luke 9: 48) Who was the most unknown, meaningless, and least person of the 19th century, the century of the great Napoleon, of the infallible Pius, and of the unapproachable Nietzsche? Who if it was not the Russian moujik pilgrim "to the Holy Places," and the Balkan peasant fighter against the crescent, the liberator of the Balkans?

A satanic plain of battle, a satanic clergy, and satanic wisdom, this is what the kaiser, the Pope, and the philosopher of the 19th century were. The Orthodox peasant of the Balkans presents the complete antithesis

of these: first of all the heroism of the bearer of the cross, secondly, the testimony of the clergy, and thirdly, the fisherman's apostolic wisdom. The words of the prayer of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ refers to them: "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants." (Matth. 11: 25) And what did God reveal to these simple peasants? He revealed bravery, the heavenly light, and divine wisdom. In other words, He revealed all that was opposite to the Western kaiser, Pope, and philosopher; it was like night and day.

The Christ-loving holy Bishop says the following about the god-killing, idol worshiping civilization of Europe: If Europe had remained Christian it would boast about Christ and not about its civilization. And the great but unbaptized nations of Asia and Africa, who have a penchant and inclination toward spirituality, would be delighted to understand Christianity and honor it. This is so because these nations boast about their beliefs, about their deities, about their religious books: one about the Koran, the other about the Vedas and so on. That is to say, they do not boast about the works of their hands, about their civilizations, but about something more important which they consider greater than these things, rather something that is most important to their people. The people of Europe, however, do not boast about Christ and His Bible, but about their dangerous machines and the cheap products of their hands, in other words about their culture and civilization. And the result of this boasting about its famous "culture" is the hatred of all non-Christian nations for Christ and Christianity. Hating the little they hate the great. Hating European people and their products, they

hate the European God. But, shame on Europe, this does not bother or worry her. Because of something else, she herself was the first to hate and reject its God. Because of the influence of an erring Church, this was the unenviable position its flawed evolution brought it to in the middle of the 19th century. But to be fair about this, the people of Europe are not responsible for this; the responsibility rests with its spiritual leaders. The flock is not responsible, but its shepherds are.

The proper thing for Europe to do would be to boast about its Christianity and its great value as its most priceless inheritance. This would have occurred, as happened in the first centuries A.D. if Europe had been synonymous with Christianity, if it was identified with Christianity. The glorification of Christ and preaching about Him was the destined mission of Europe by God. Apart from Christ, Europe has nothing to boast about. Without Christ, Europe is the poorest of beggars and the most shameless exploiter of this world.

The Christ-illuminated Bishop tells us this bitter truth about European education:

Europe's schools have divorced themselves from faith in God. And in this lies its transformation into the poisoner, and in it is the death of European humanity as well. In pagan civilizations, science was never separated from religion, even though their religions were silly and false. This only happened in Europe, in that Europe that received the most perfect faith. Because of its clash with its ecclesiastical leaders, Europe became angry and rejected the perfect faith but kept perfect science. Oh, my brothers, it rejected divine knowledge and accepted human ignorance! What foolishness and what darkness!

The God-inspired Bishop says the following about the voluntary blindness of Western humanity: the West had

become moronic. This was the reason for its disgrace and madness. In Christian times, when the West was Orthodox, it was concerned with the spiritual and with its mind. But as much as it removed itself from Christian truth and virtue, its spiritual vision became less and less so that it darkened altogether in the 20th century. All that it has left now is physical eyes to see the aesthetics of things.

It has armed its external eyes with many excellent machines so that it can see the perceptible world better and more precisely, the beauty and color of things and creatures, their number and measure and size. It looks at tiny worms and microbes that nobody has seen before with the microscope. It looks through the telescope and sees the stars as though they were just above the chimneys, as no one has looked at them before. But this is where its vision stops and goes no further. If it concerns the intellectual aspects and spiritual knowledge of the hidden nucleus of things, and the meaning and significance of all of creation in this great universe around us, about this, oh! my brothers, Western civilization is blinder today than Moslem Arabia, Brahman India, Buddhist Tibet, and spiritualistic China. In fact, Christ has not been shamed more in the last two millennia than from it, Europe, where baptized people are blinder than the unbaptized!

Because of this Paul would say the same thing to the moronic West today that he said to the baptized Galatians of his day. This is what he wrote to them: "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you...? Are ye so foolish having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3: 1-3) Europe

also started in the spirit at one time, but now is ending up in the flesh, that is to say, with carnal vision, carnal reasoning, carnal desires, and carnal conquests, as though someone bewitched it! Its entire life moves in two dimensions in these days of ours: in its length and width. It does not know anything about depth and height. And because of this it is struggling for earth, for territory, for expansion, for space and only space.

See how it goes from one war to the other, from one terror to the other because God did not create man to be just an animal in space, but to penetrate the depths of the mysteries with his mind, and to climb with his heart to divine heights. War for the earth is against truth. War against the truth is war against divine and human nature.

O bitterness more bitter than gall! How people suffer, are tortured, and how much they sacrifice for this temporal deceptive earthly kingdom! If they had suffered but one per cent of these tortures and sacrifices for the heavenly kingdom, war would have become so ridiculous as to make them laugh until tears came to their eyes. It is with difficulty that they give two cents to Christ, but to the Church of Moloch—to Satan—they give all their property and all of their children!

Europe should cross itself and follow Christ. It should remember the Most Holy Mother of God and the twelve great Apostles, and the scales would fall from its eyes. And it will again be as beautiful as the Orthodox Europe of Christ was during the first thousand years. Then she will be happy, and we will be happy with her. Then all of the weeping peoples of Europe will rejoice and sing with us the eternal doxology: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory." Amen.

The Christ-like humble Bishop says about the arrogant people of Europe:

The ambitious and haughty people of Europe do not recognize their own faults. They have lost an awareness of sin, of sin and repentance. For them, someone else is always to blame for every evil in this world, never themselves. Then how is it possible for them to commit a sin, since they have sat upon the throne of God and proclaimed themselves infallible! Their religious leader, the Pope, was the first to declare himself this. The leaders and the kings of the West then followed his example. Everyone declared himself infallible, those who wore the cross and those who brought the sword.

The Christ-loving Bishop says the following about the trial between Christ and Europe:

If the history of the last three centuries—the 18th, 19th, 20th—were to be given a proper name, then there would be no more proper appellation than the record of the trial between Europe and Christ. This is because nothing has taken place in Europe in the last three hundred years that did not relate to Christ (Who is) God. In this trial between Christ and Europe the following happens:

Christ says to Europe that it was baptized in His name and it should remain faithful to Him and His Gospel.

To this, Europe, the defendant, answers:

All religions are the same. We were told this by the French encyclopedists. And no one can force us to believe anything. Europe tolerates all religions as the superstitions that they are, because of its imperialistic interests. It does not have any religion, itself. When, however, it realizes all of its political aims, then it will

settle its accounts very quickly with all of the superstitions of the people.

Christ then asks with sorrow:

How can you people live with only your imperialistic, material interests, that is to say, only with animalistic desires for your bodily appetites? I wanted to make you gods and sons and daughters of God but you go away from Me and try to become like a pack of animals?

To this Europe answers:

You are old-fashioned. In place of your Gospel we discovered biology and zoology. And now we know that we are not descended from You and Your heavenly Father, but from orangutans and gorillas, that is to say, apes. And we are perfectly able to become gods because we do not recognize any other god than ourselves.

To this Christ says:

You are more obstinate than the ancient Jews were. I raised you up from the darkness of barbarism to the heavenly light, but you have gone back to the darkness like a water buffalo goes into the mud. I shed My blood for your sake. I showed My love to you, when all of the Angels turned their faces away from you because they could not stand the smell of hell that came from you. When you were all darkness and smelly, I was the only One Who stayed to clean you and illuminate you. Now stop being unbelievers, because you will only return to that unbearable darkness and stench again.

To this Europe mockingly shouts:

Get away from us. We do not recognize you. We follow European civilization and culture, and the Greek philosophers. We want to be free. We have universities. Science is the star that guides us. Our slogan is: freedom, brotherhood, equality. And our mind is the god of all gods. You are an Asiatic. And we reject You. You are

only an old myth our grandmothers and grandfathers believed in.

With tears in His eyes, Christ says:

Behold now I am leaving, but you will see. You have left God's road and you are following Satan's. Blessings and happiness have been taken away from you. Your life is in My hands, because I was crucified for you. And yet in spite of all this I will not punish you, but your own sins and your apostasy from Me your Savior, shall punish you. I revealed the love of My Father to everyone, and with love I wanted to save all of you.

Europe then says:

Love? Our agenda only includes a hardy and manly hatred for everyone who disagrees with us. Your love is only a fable. And in place of this fable we have raised up the flag: of ethnicity, of internationalism, of the state, of progress, of evolution, of trans-oceanism, and of cultism. Our salvation is found in these, so get away from us.

My brothers, the debate ended in our times. Christ went far away from Europe, as He did at one time from the land of the Gadarenes, when the Gadarenes asked Him to. As soon as He left wars and violence broke out, and terror and horror, catastrophe, and the breakdown of everything. Pre-Christian barbarism returned to Europe, the barbarism of the Avars, the Huns, the Lombards, the Africans, only it was a hundred times worse. Christ picked up His cross and His blessings and left. And what remained was the darkness and the stench. And now you must decide with whom you will go, whom you shall follow: the gloom and the stench of Europe or Christ?

The Bishop, this evangelist who is equal to the Apostles, says this about "the White Demonization," that

is to say, about Europe:

What do you think about Europe? The Africans and the Asiatics call the Europeans "white devils." And so, they could call Europe: the White Demonization, "white" because of the color of its skin. "Demonization," because of the darkness of its soul because Europe rejected the only true God and took on the throne and the stance of the Roman Caesars. And this is just as the Caesars, before the destruction of Rome, proclaimed to all the peoples of the earth that everyone could worship their gods as they wished, that Europe would tolerate this. However, it is their duty to also worship Europe as the highest of all deities, either in the name of Europe itself or in the name of civilization. And this is how, my brethren, this vampire, satanic Rome, was resurrected in our times, that Rome which, prior to Constantine the Great, persecuted the Christians with fire and sword, and hindered Christ as he came to Europe. Only now the White Demonization has fallen into a worse sickness than ancient Rome had because, if pagan Rome was molested by one demon, the White Demonization was molested by seven wicked spirits, each one of which is far stronger than the demon of Rome. And so we have the new idolatrous Rome, the new martyrdom of Christianity. Get ready, then, for the persecution at the hands of the White Demonization which is to come.

The new pagan Europe does not boast of any deity greater than itself. It boasts about its wisdom, its riches, its power. Like a puffed up balloon which is about to explode it makes the Africans and Asians laugh with its boasting, like a ripe tumor ready to open and fill the universe with its stench. This is today's anti-Christian Europe, the White Demonization.

Europe lives in the vile cycle of inventions. Whenever someone comes up with a new one, they declare him a genius. Again, whoever describes the inventions of others, of these geniuses, he is proclaimed a doctor of sciences. The inventions of Europe are numerous, almost countless. Yet none of these inventions makes man any better, more honest, or enlightened. And not one single spiritual or moral invention has appeared in Europe in the last thousand years, only material inventions. And these inventions of hers have brought humanity to the brink of destruction, to spiritual darkness, and to a dismal devastation without precedent in Christian history. We do not know for sure if Europe, with all of its inventions, turned away from Christ because of its own ill will or from the influence of the ill will others.

When the telescope was invented so that far off stars could be seen, the European scholars studied them at the expense of the Bible of Christ.

When the microscope was invented, they again laughed at Christ.

When the train, the steam engine, the telegraph, and telephone were invented, the air resounded with the self-boasting of the European at the expense of God and His Christ.

When engines were invented for traveling across the seas, for flying in the air, for communicating from great distances, Christ appeared as useless and as old-fashioned to Europe as an Egyptian mummy. However, Europe has used all of its inventions suicidally in the last two hundred years, for world wars, for crime, for hatred, for destruction, for deceit, for extortion, for the desecration of what is holy and sacred to the people, for lies, dishonesty, debauchery, and atheism throughout the world. And so Europe does not actually fool anyone but

itself. The non-Christian nations have understood what she is, what she offers and what she wants; that is why they call her the White Demonization (the White Demons in other words).

Listen to what David the prophet king says: "Some glory in chariots, and some in horses: but we will glory in the name of the Lord our God." (Psalms 19: 7) These braggarts will nod off on the pillows of their false glory and we will arise. While Paul the Apostle shouts even louder: O people, "what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou has not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4: 7) Know that all inventions were discovered upon the land that belongs to God, before the very eyes of God, and learn compunction and honesty!



Seminary students with instructors: Archbishop John Maximovitch and Justin Popovich in center, 1933.

SELECTIVE WRITINGS OF FR. JUSTIN

I. *F*rom the preface to the book of Fr. Justin, *Sinful Souls*, Belgrade, 1968.

- From the moment when the question of the human soul will be brought forth, there will be extended before us a vast ocean of divine and awesome mysteries. When again, there is brought forth the question of sin, every human conscience will be transformed into a spasm before the inexplicable "a mystery of sin" (2 Thes. 2: 7), and its power. The human soul, due to its nature, continuously overflows beyond all boundaries, but the soul and sin as if they are not of this world but from another. And truly this is taking place; the soul is from God, the sin is from the Devil. When the soul surrenders to God and lives according to His laws, gradually its life is transformed into paradise. When, however, the soul is given to sin, this "law" of Satan, its life is gradually transformed into hell.

- Sin is the only thing that is unnatural in the nature of man and of the world. "Strange," alien, intruder, criminal, executioner, homicide—this is sin in every one of us. But, in its destructive power, this sin is something worse and more horrible than all else. What? In its essence, in its energy, it is identified with the Devil since

it also corrupts and destroys. According to the unrivaled definition of St. John Chrysostom "Satan is sin." Within this definition lies the entire "mystery of sin and lawlessness" and the entire power of sin and the entire hell of iniquity. There exists no Satan without sin, and no sin without Satan. Even in the smallest sin the devil is concealed. Satan is uncharitable to man because "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," (James 1: 15), and "the wages of sin is death," (Romans 6: 23). This is the final atrocity of sin: death. The experience of the human race testifies that sin and death are identical destructive energies of the devil. With these, the Devil holds man in his horrible embrace. But for how long? As long as man remains unrepentant. The one who repents according to God's will is saved.

- In our earthly world, the "mystery of iniquity," the mystery of sin, and the mystery of evil are enormously rising. While, on the contrary, the mystery of good, which exists within the innate conscience of man, is always connected with its life-giving roots, with the foundation of every good, God, and certainly our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Life and immortality are nourished and maintained through Him. Christ, the God of every good, came into our earthly world to give us the medication for every sin, for every evil. Outside of the sin of human nature, there is no evil. This is the repentance: "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matth. 4: 17). The salvation, the cure, the immortal and sinless life is at hand. If man rejects this unique pan-medication, the penitence, then the human being is inevitably led to demonism, to Satanism, to the kingdom of evil, to hell.

- Through sin, man opposes God, he becomes God-fighting, an opposition to God. Sin is the main energy of the Devil because he can bear neither God, nor anything divine. When he is firmly established in the soul of man, he gradually destroys all goodness within him, first faith, then prayer, then love, fasting, alms-giving. With the desire to sin, man is gradually planning his suicide. There is no worse form of homicide than that which occurs through sin; it is truly the murder of man. Therefore, the main task of the spiritually vigilant man is to kill the sin within himself, and, in this way, kill the devil himself, which assassinates us through sin. But how can man kill sin? How will man kill Satan? This can only be done through the God-man Jesus Christ, who became man for this purpose only. He accomplishes this through our faith in Him, our love for Him, our repentance before Him, our prayer to Him.

- Our road and journey of human life, even here on Earth, is extended from hell to paradise, from Satan to God. Within this also lies the immortality and the eternity of man. The unrepentant sin, even on this Earth, becomes for man an unbearable torture, a hell with all of its consequences: Anger — one torment, pride — another torment; hatred — the third torment; avarice, wickedness, malice — hell, hell, hell. This is because, within every sin lies Satan, and within him is hell. This always happens when a sin, any sin, dominates the soul of man. The salvation of the soul from these torments of hell is only one: through faith and repentance, the Life-giver and All-merciful Lord Jesus Christ, who overflows the soul with the eternal paradisiacal peace and immortal joy. Only thus can man find, through the

Holy Spirit, his justification in Christ, his immortality, his eternity.

- Only the gospel of Christ fully knows the mystery of sin and the problem of sin and everything which hides within it. The prodigal son of the Gospel is the perfect example of the repentant sinner. The Gospel shows us that man, through his free will, can share his life with Earth and with Heaven, with Satan and with God, with paradise and with hell. Sin gradually strips man of everything divine in him, paralyzes his every divine inclination and desire, until it finally throws him into the bosom of Satan. And then man reaches the plight of grazing the swine of his master, the Devil. The swine are passions, which are always greedy and gluttonous. In such a life, the unfortunate man is nothing more than insane. In a shocking parable of the Gospel, the Lord says about the prodigal son, "he came to himself," (Luke 15: 17). How did he come to himself? He came to himself through repentance. Through sin, man becomes mad, insane. Every sin, even the most seemingly insignificant one, is always an insanity of the soul. Through repentance, man comes to his senses, becomes complete again, comes to himself. Then he cries out loud to God, runs to Him, and cries towards Heaven, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight" (Luke 15: 21). And what is the heavenly Father doing? He is always infinitely merciful upon seeing His child in a state of repentance. He has compassion for him, runs, embraces him, and kisses him. He orders His heavenly hosts, the holy angels: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this is My son

who was dead, and is alive again; and he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." (Luke 15: 22–24) And this is taking place for each and every one of us, and for the sake of every sinner who repents. Namely, joy and happiness is taking place in the heaven of the All-merciful Lord and God, and together with Him, all of the holy angels.

II. *From Fr. Justin, The Orthodox Philosophy of Truth: The Dogmatics of the Orthodox Church, Book I, Belgrade, 1932, 22–23, 41, 70.*

- The sacred dogmas are the eternal and saving divine Truths because they are based upon the life-giving power of the divine Holy Trinity, from which all of the power of the new life in Christ is derived. The new life in Christ is weaved completely from the dogmas, from the dogmatic truths of the revelation of God.

- The eternal dogmatic truths, the divine dogmas, are the subject of the faith, and the faith is an exercise of man, and therefore, the human mind. All of the evangelical virtues of the exercise and of the grace, with faith first, are the heavenly bread of the eternal life, with which man nourishes, makes worthy, sanctifies, perfects himself, and is restored in his God-likeness. Life within the Church, through grace, inevitably becomes the source of knowledge, through grace, of the eternal dogmatic truths. Living them as the content of his life, man comes nearer to the authority, the Truth, and the saving power. Just as the Lord has said: "If any man will do his will", (namely, of God the Father, "he shall know

the doctrine", for the dogmas, if they are derived "from God." (John 7: 17)

- Everything in the God-man Christ is real, is incarnated. Due to the uniqueness of the Lord lies the fact that He is the incarnated God and, within the God-man are all of the incarnated divine truths. Therefore, since God was incarnated and along with Him all of the divine truths, this means that these are realized, have the possibility to be incarnated in the sphere of human life and reality, in the limitations of time and space, as it testifies to the whole New Testament and the entire history of the Church of Christ and of His Saints.

- The so-called logical evidence for the existence of God is: the cosmological, theological, psychological, historical, ethical proofs, and many more, which, through the passing of time have been formulated into philosophical rationalism. They cannot, in the Dogmatics of the Orthodox Church, have a value of real evidence because they are based on the principles of the relative, limited, sinful minds and senses of humanity. To the Church and the Revelation, the truth about the existence of God is an illogical and irrational hypothesis, which has the need of proof with the basis of logical reasoning, the truth which God has revealed to us, and is therefore the unquestionable, true evidence. As a divine and given reality, this truth is not dependent on proof and arguments from rational functions of the mind. The logical proof proves God so much more than it hides Him.

III. *From the prologue of the Book of Fr. Justin, The Orthodox Philosophy of Truth: The Dogma of the Orthodox Church, Book I, Belgrade, 1932, 9, 11.*

The philosophy of the Holy Spirit is the wisdom and the knowledge, the wisdom through grace and knowledge by the grace of the nature of beings; and this wisdom possesses as the pupil of the eye the knowledge of the divine and the human, the visible and the invisible. The philosophy of the Holy Spirit is at the same time the creative power which, by "becoming similar with God" through the road of the ascetico-charismatic perfection, multiplies within man the divine wisdom about God, the world and man. This character of the Orthodox philosophy emphasizes St. John of Damascus when he says: "Philosophy is to liken with God" and therefore is "the art of arts and the science of sciences." As a source of life, the philosophy of the Holy Spirit is the only art which has the manifold possibilities to fabricate a God-like and Christ-like personality, and is the only science which can teach the selfish and mortal man how to overcome death and obtain immortality. Therefore, the Orthodox philosophy is the art of arts and the science of sciences.

The mystery of Truth does not lie in things, ideas, and symbols, but in a person and this person is the Theanthropic person, the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why the Lord said: "I am the Truth", a Truth all-perfect, always undiminished and unchanged, always one and the same in its perfect fullness, always one and the same "yesterday, today, and forever." (Heb. 13: 8).

IV. *F*rom the prologue of the book of Fr. Justin, *The Lives of St. Savva and St. Symeon*, Munich, 1962, 16).

Only the mind which has been cleansed from the passions and the darkness of sin, and has been sanctified by the grace of the Holy Spirit, is in a position to feel and to love that which is holy and to live from it and for it. Only the pure can know the pure: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." First they will see Him in the face of His saints because God "rests in His saints." There they will also see every divine gift which is placed upon every creature of God.

V. *F*rom the book of Fr. Justin, *Dostoevski*, Belgrade, 1940.

- The human conscience is a gift of God. It is so mysterious and enigmatic in its immediateness and reality that nothing less than God could give it to man. In its most inner cell, the human conscience is God-conscience because in essence the conscience has been given as a divine gift to man. Man could not have a self-conscience, if this had never been given to him by God.¹

- The true and real God-knowledge and self-knowledge is obtained by man only through the path of real love. By loving God, man knows that his soul is Christ-like and immortal. The experience of love as a method of earning God-knowledge is found in one of the Gospels, which the God-man donated to the human

¹Page 13.

race. Using this method, man quickly finds God and discovers his own self as well. While he is on the roads of hatred, man easily loses God and his own self as well. Having been introduced and used by the God-man, this method of obtaining God-knowledge and self-knowledge became and has remained the definite method of Orthodox gnoseiology.¹

- In the God-man Christ, there exists something incomparably greater than the Truth, the Goodness, and the Beauty. He himself is all of these in an absolute meaning and, at the same time, something much greater than them. Whatever good exists for the human soul, Christ attracts it toward himself with His invincible magnet of love. He gives to the human soul that which not even absolute Truth can give, nor absolute Goodness, nor absolute Beauty by themselves alone can ever give.²

- Only one road leads to the knowledge of Truth: Love. Obtaining Love, which is God Himself, man is truly uniting himself with God and in this way is coming closer to real knowledge of Eternal Truth. Love fills man with God. In proportion to the measure of his self to God, man knows God. Filled by God, man is illuminated, sanctified, divined, and in this way reaches true knowledge of God with the acceptance and practice of the "first and great commandment." (2 Peter 1: 4) The divine energy of love introduces the entire man to the way of divination: it divines the heart, the soul, the will,

¹Page 17.

²Page 18.

and everything else which is human; he lives through God, feels through God, thinks through God, hopes through God. Besides this, the mystery of God reveals the Holy Spirit to man, because "the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God." (1 Cor. 2: 11) The Holy Spirit is "the spirit of love" and "the Spirit of wisdom and of prudence", namely, the Spirit of knowledge.¹

- The God-man made Love the essence and the method of the knowledge of God and of the knowledge of man. This is the main creative power of which the New Testament is composed. The mystery of the marvelous Person of Christ lies within love. The mystery of the evangelical gnoseiology is found in Love. God-human Love is the new road to knowledge. Its imperative order is: love in order to know. The true knowledge of everything depends on Love, is born within Love, grows through Love, and arrives to perfection through Love. I love, therefore I know. Knowledge is the result of Love. The entire philosophy of knowledge is contained within the entire philosophy of Love. Only if man loves with a Christ-like Love is he a true philosopher, and only then does he know the mystery of life and of the world. Through Love God is God, as Through Love man is man.²

- The Christ-like personality, led by Christ to the mysteries of the world of God, sees the Logos and the logic of the universe and every creation as coming from

¹Page 213.

²Page 222.

the head of the Creator. When it is mirrored in the mirror of the soul of such a personality, the creation of sickness and of corruption rises into responsible impeccability and beauty. Within the Christ-like soul is revealed the final mystery of Creation because it sympathizes with and loves Creation. The loved always reveals his mystery to that one who loves. The Christ-like personality observes Creation and nature not as wild predators which must cruelly subdue their prey but instead as weak creatures upon which mercy, compassion, and love must be shown. For the Christ-like personality, Creation is not matter without a soul to which we must behave with cruelty, audacity, and exploitation, but as a priceless mystery of God upon which we must show compassion and mercy through prayer and love. "Love every creature of God", says Dostoevski, "and all the creatures together and every crumb. Love the animals, love the plants, love every creature. If you love every creature, you will understand once, then without effort you will begin to understand more and more every day," (Dostoevski, *Brothers Karamazov*).¹

VI. *From the book, Philosophical Abyss:*

- In all of the world, there is nothing more terrifying than man. The philosophy of man is unbearable, even to the minds of the angels, and it provokes sorrow in the hearts of the cherubim. The endlessness of man is bitter. Who is not embittered who has tasted with its senses its

¹Page 256.

bitter knowledge? Let us be honest until the end: If the marvelous Lord and Savior Jesus Christ had not been resurrected, and with the light of his resurrection had not illuminated and given meaning to the endlessness of man, who could not consider the Creator of such a being, as is man, incomprehensible and not a God-man? Only the most Sweet Lord Jesus Christ, with His divine love sweetens the bitter mystery of the human being, filling it with His self, His life, and His endlessness. Where is the center of the human being? In the Resurrected and Ascended Lord Jesus Christ who "sitteth on the right hand of God." (Col. 3: 1) With the resurrected God-man, eternity became a common attribute of human life. Which human thought, desire, and feeling is now immortal? Only the thought in Christ, the desire and the feeling in Christ is immortal. Man is a Christian only if he thinks through Christ, believes, feels, and desires through Christ (*cf.* Phil. 2: 5).

- Man is the only being in the entire world who is extended from paradise to hell. The gamut of human thought, human reflections, human sense, and human disposition vibrates in a much greater width than the angels and Satan. It is greater than the angels because man can descend to the Devil, but, at the same time, is greater than the Devil because man can also be elevated unto God. Man, therefore, is an eternal being, whether he wants to be or not. When does the immortality of man begin? It begins from the moment of conception within the womb of his mother. And when does the paradise or the hell of man begin? It begins from the free union of man and Divine good or diabolical evil, namely, the union of man and God, or man and Satan. What, therefore, is paradise? Paradise is the feeling of

God according to the word of the Holy Fathers. If you feel God within yourself, then you have already reached paradise. The saint of our times, Saint John of Krostant, says, "When God is present in all of man's thoughts, in all of his desires, and in all of his intentions, through his words and through his acts, the kingdom of God has come upon him. Then man sees God everywhere: in his holy thought, in his holy action, in the holy matter."

- The heart of the invisible is always present in the heart of the visible. It is within its nucleus. Let us be honest and pure and we will see that the three worlds — the universe, the earth, and man — constitute themselves as invisible powers or energies dressed within matter. Every creature in this world constitutes one created frame with which God has framed His thought, and all of His creations together, create the luxurious mosaic of the uncreated "words" of God. Going from one creation to another, we go from one image of God to another because God created man "according to His image." Every knowledge of ours says to the world and to man very clearly: this visible world exists and relies on the invisible world which has no limits and no end.

- According to the teaching of the Orthodox faith, within the church of the God-man, this is the most important and the ideal supreme: to find the person of God within man. Just as you discover it in man, you discovered his eternal value, His uniqueness, His immortality, and His eternity. Often however, the divine image in man is covered with the filth of pleasure, the thorns of passion, the weeds of sin, and the outer skin of malice. But you are an Orthodox Christian and you must remove all of these from the divine image in order

to bring out the human person again in all of his divine beauty. When you behave in this way, you love man despite his sin. You will never identify sin, with the sinner, and evil with the criminal. You shall always separate the sin from the sinner, you shall condemn the sin, and you shall have mercy, pity, and compassion for the sinner just as the Lord had done for the sinful adulteress of the Gospel of John (8: 3-11). The most merciful Lord blames sin, but He does not blame the sinful woman. It is like saying, "I do not censure the God-like" and "according to the image of God" soul of yours. You are not the same as sin because you possess within yourself God-like powers which can liberate you from this sin. "Go, and sin no more." (John 8: 11)

- The steadfastness and the immortable in sense and knowledge of the divine reasonableness of the world characterized the angels and the saints. Complete absence of this sense and knowledge characterizes the demons and men petrified by evil. The wavering in this sense and knowledge characterizes the man with little faith. Paradise consists of the firm and immortable sense and knowledge of the divine logic of the world which was created by God Logos. The Devil is the Devil for this because he completely and eternally denies the reasonableness and rationality in the world. For him, everything is foolishness and absurdity, and for this reason he must eliminate and destroy them.

- Man is placed on the road between paradise and hell, between God and Satan. Every thought and reflection of man, and every feeling of this, brings the soul one step closer to paradise or one step closer to hell. If it is reasonable according to God, the thought and

reflection connects man with the God Logos, the Incomprehensible and Invincible, and this, for man, is already paradise. If, however, the thought is without or against the God Logos, man is inevitably connected with the irrational, the foolish, and the Devil, and this is already hell. Whatever is valid and whatever has power for the thought is valid and has power for the sense as well. Everything, then, begins here on Earth, the paradise and the hell for man. The life of man on this planet is an enormous drama. Here, the temporal and the eternal worlds continually clash, the mortal and the immortal, the good and the evil, the things of the Devil and the things of the Lord.

- Human thought is a curse when it does not want to be transformed into prayer and does not want to be perfected through prayer. It is inconceivable for thought to exist which, before the mystery of the worlds, is not transformed into a prayerful exaltation and disposition. Nothing is more admirable than the thought which, before the view of the world of God, is unconsciously poured out in our prayers.

VII. *From Fr. Justin, "Man and God-man, Studies about Orthodox Theology," Athens, 1974.*

- Our *communion* with the Savior Christ establishes the salvation; communion with Him, as sanctifier, is the sanctification; communion with Him, as God, is the divination; communion with Him, as Immortal, is the immortality; communion with Him, as Risen, is the Resurrection; communion with Him, as Ascended, is the

Ascension and in the right place of God the Father (cf. 1 Cor. 1: 9).

- "Now I beseech you. . .that ye all speak the same thing." (1 Cor. 1: 10) The Christians can all speak the same when they have the same feelings, the same thoughts, the same way of life. They obtain this when they unite their soul with the catholic soul of the Church, their heart with the catholic heart of the Church, their mind with the catholic mind of the Church, and their thought with the catholic thought of the Church. (cf. Acts 4: 32) Then they think, feel, and "speak" through the catholic soul of the Church, through her catholic heart and her catholic thought.

- "For we are laborers together with God." (1 Cor. 3: 9) The ideal of the true and perfect man was realized in the person of the God-man with the God-human synergy. This God-human cooperation, taking place through the God-human body of the Church, becomes a common property of man and a common way of life, thought, action, and of their existence. In the Church, men are incorporated with the God-man, Christ, namely are born with Him and by Him, are transformed with Him and by Him, are crucified with Him and by Him, are resurrected with Him and by Him, partake of His Ascension and by Him, are living eternally in Him and by Him, are feeling in Him and by Him, are acting with Him and by Him. In this catholic God-humanization of man lies his exact salvation and sanctification. The human race was created for this reason, and the paradisaical life of our forefathers was created in this joyful synergy with God. The fall occurred when we rejected this synergy and began to work through sin and cooper-

ation with the Devil. The God Logos became man in order to restore the life of Paradise and the order of life within it, namely the cooperation with God.

- The Lord Jesus Christ was created as a divinely deep, divinely wide, and divinely firm base for the *construction* of the Church of God. He, and only He, the God-man is simultaneously the foundation of the Oecumenical, local, familial, and the personal Church. (cf. 1 Cor. 3: 10-11)

- The *Love*, of which the Apostle Paul speaks, is the love of Christ; it is the love which the Lord called "new love," and the commandment about it, the "new commandment." This love differs from every other love of our human world. The whole newness of this love is found in the fact that it compels us to love as Christ loves: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you." (John 13: 34) The God-human "new" love makes the New Testament eternally new. Personification of such love constitutes the God-man Christ himself. Through His self He gave the witness and the assurance of the fundamental message of the New Testament: "God is love." (1 John. 4: 16) But Christ is not only divine love; He is also the "God of love." (2 Cor. 13: 11) Because of this, the truly divine and eternal love is only that one which is derived from Him, the God-man. (1 Cor. 13: 1ff.)

- Undoubtedly, we are only saved as living and organic members of the theanthropic body of the Savior, namely of the Church, of a holy Church, apostolic Church, catholic Church because the Church is nothing

but the whole theanthropic life of Christ, extended to all the centuries and to the whole eternity. (2 Cor. 13: 4-5)

- There is no true Gospel for man without and outside the God-man. The whole annunciation, the entire Gospel lies only in the God-man. . . What is the Gospel? The Gospel is whatever Christ is, who, descending from Heaven to Earth, brought with Him as God, and whatever He did for us as God-man, and whatever He gave us as Savior in His God-human body, in the Church. These things constitute the Gospel. In other words, the Gospel is the whole God, all the Truth of God, all the Justice of God, all the love of God, all the Life of God, all of the perfections of God, which have been revealed and given to us by the God Logos, the Lord Jesus. . . The God-man, Christ, the whole in the whole fullness of His God-human Hypostasis is the only exact, true Gospel, the unique, true, good news for the human race. (Gal. 1: 7)

- The organism of the Church is the most complex organism of which the human spirit knows. Why? This is because it is the unique, God-human organism in which all the mysteries of God and man, all the divine and human powers, constitute one body. Only the all-wise, omnipotent God-man, the Lord Jesus, was able to connect and join all these things in one body, His body, of which He Himself is the head, the eternal head. He directs the whole life in this marvelous and wonder-working body, the marvelous and wonder-working God and man. Every member of it lives for the whole body, but also the whole body lives within each one of its members. All live in each one and for each one. But, also, each one lives in all and for all. Each member

grows with the common growth of the body, but also the whole body grows with the growth of each member. All these numerous members of the body, all of these organs, the organs of senses, the cells, connect in one eternally-living God-human body, the God-man, Christ Himself, adopting the energies of each member to the catholic life of the body. . . The evangelical activity of each member of the Church, even if it is entirely special and personal, is always and from every perspective catholic and general. The task of each member of the Church is always personal yet collective, personal yet catholic. Even if it appears that one member of the Church acts only for himself (for example, the asceticism of a hermit), in reality he acts for its entirety. Such is the organization of the God-human organism of the Church, which Christ Himself directs and leads. (Eph. 4: 16)

- All the Universes, all the existing worlds, and beings, hold on just a moment! Down all the hearts, all the minds, all the lives, all the immortalities, all the eternities because all of these, without Christ are hell for me, one hell beside the other hell; all are innumerable and endless hells and to the height and to the length and to width. Life without Christ, death without Christ, truth without Christ, the sun without Christ, and universes without Him are all horrible foolishness, unbearable martyrdom, Sisyphean torment, hell! I want neither life nor death without Thee Oh Most Sweet Lord! I want neither truth, justice, paradise, nor eternity. NO, no! I want only Thee, Thou only is everything, in and above all! . . . The truth, if there is no Christ, is not needed by me, it is only a hell. Justice, love, good, and happiness, they are all the same hell without Christ; even God Himself is a hell if there is no Christ. I want neither the

truth without Christ, nor justice without Christ, nor love without Christ, nor God without Christ. I do not want any of them, in any possible way! I will accept any kind of death, let you kill me in any way you want, because without Christ I want nothing. Neither myself, nor even God Himself, wants anything else between these two; I do not want it, I do not want it, I do not want it! (Phil. 1: 21 and 3: 8)

- Our Lord Jesus became man, so that "we may walk in Him," to live in Him, as in earthly God-man, and not to see Him from afar, to admire Him, and to philosophize about Him. . . "Walk ye in Him," is the commandment of commandments to live, namely in Him, and Him not adjusting Himself to us, but ourselves to Him, not changing and altering Him according to ourselves, but changing ourselves according to Him: neither remodeling Him according to our image, but remodeling ourselves according to His image. Only the haughty lunatics, these foolish, soul-destroyers, falsify and distort the God-man Christ according to their wishes and their perceptions from which there are so many "pseudo-Christes" in the world, and so many pseudo-Christians. The true God-man Christ, however, in all the fullness of His evangelical God-human reality, is in a whole present in His God-human body the Church, as much during the time of the holy Apostles as today and forever. His God-human life is extended in the God-human body of the Church to the ages of ages. Living in the Church we are living "in Him" exactly as the Christ-like Apostle orders. And this, in the most perfect and complete measure live the Saints, a fact which explains their miraculous sanctity. Living with the soul and body in Christ, the Saints are sanctified by Him, become Christ-

like, divinized, become omnipotent, in the same way in the post-apostolic period as in the apostolic period. And in the same way now, and yesterday, and tomorrow, and always "until the close of the age," they preserve the God-human image of Christ. (Col. 2: 6)

- The entire Old Testament was, so to speak, a shadow of the God Logos. As an enormous shadow precedes the body, in the same way the whole world was walking before Him. The entire religion of the Old Testament is the shadow of a religion behind which comes the body: the incarnated God Logos, His God-human body the Church. And the reality is this: all of the visible world is nothing but a shadow, which indicates beforehand and announces the body that comes behind it, the incarnation of the God Logos. By His incarnation and the Church, His body barely reveals the true reality of the created worlds, their content, their meaning, their purpose. In the God-human body of the Church, not only the visible but also the invisible receive their "body," their most permanent and reasonable (*naslogos-nija*) reality. (Col. 2: 17)

- The Church is the life-giving body of the God-man Christ, and by Him and in Him the body of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity works the salvation of the world in the Church through the acts of His grace which deliver each member of the Church from sin, death, and the devil, and fill it with the eternal life, the eternal truth, the eternal justice, the eternal love. The true Church is "in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Thus, each member of the Church is only a true member when he is "in God our Father and the Lord Jesus

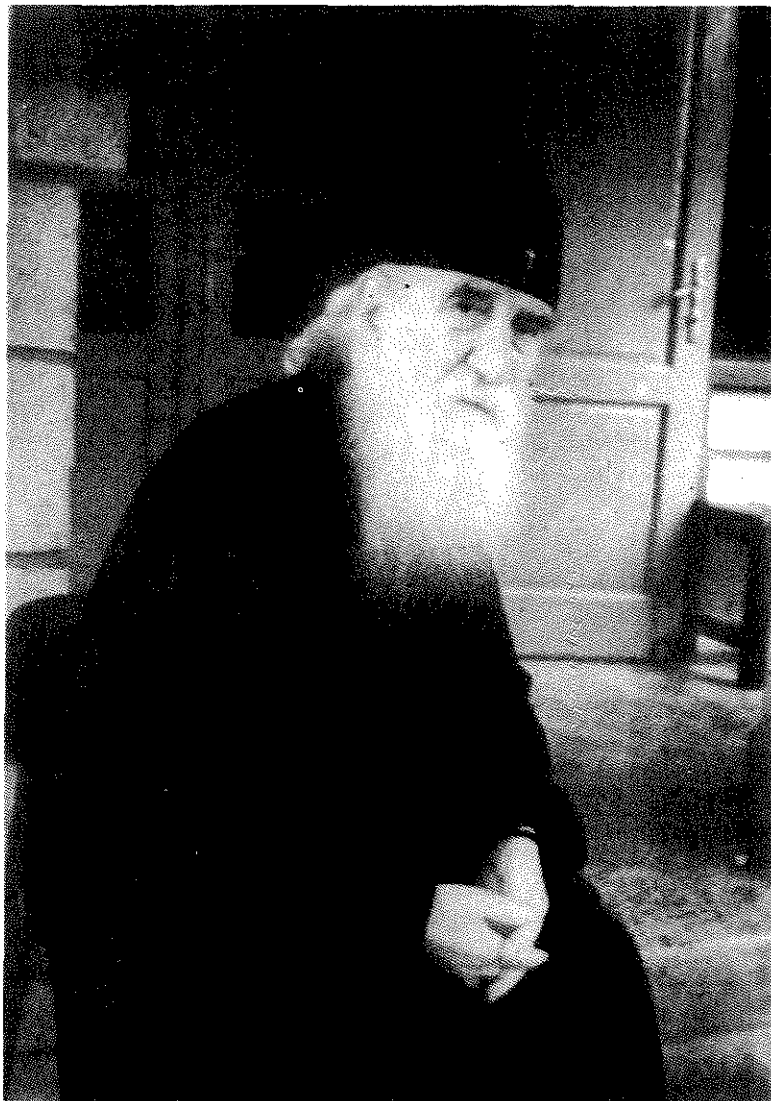
Christ," when he lives in Them and is saved by Their grace and by the struggle. (2 Thes. 1: 7)

• What are "our traditions"? They are everything that the God-man Christ, He Himself, and by the Holy Spirit, gave the commandment to hold and to live according to Them; whatever He delivered in His Church, in which He dwells continuously with His Holy Spirit. (cf. Matth. 28: 19-29) "Our traditions" are our whole life in grace in God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the life of us Christians, which began in the Church of Christ, through the Apostles, by the descent of the Holy Spirit. All of this life of ours is not from us, but from the Lord Jesus, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, or, more precisely, our entire life is from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. . . Thus, our "traditions" are the new life of the grace in the Holy Spirit, which is the soul of the Church, the life in the Eternal Truth of God, in the Eternal Justice of God, in the Eternal Love of God, in the Eternal Life of God. Here man is not creating anything, nor can he create the Eternal Truth, the Eternal Justice, the Eternal Love, the Eternal Life, but they are for him to accept, to change into his own. In Christ and in His Church all of these are given by the grace of the Holy Spirit to man, are given and "delivered." Man is obligated to accept these "traditions" and to live according to them. . .

Everything which was delivered to the Apostles by the Savior Christ and the Holy Spirit, constitutes exactly "the tradition," the holy tradition, namely the whole teaching of the Savior and all of the life-giving energies for the realization of this teaching in the life of man. All of these were delivered to us "whether by word or by epistle." The tradition is in part written, while the most

part was given orally, but all in common constitute the divine Revelation, namely the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of salvation, given by God in the Church for the salvation of the human race "from now and forever more." The entire Gospel was delivered to the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit, and precisely for this the Gospel is "the tradition" of God in all of its broadness. The written Gospel becomes complete with the unwritten Gospel of the Church and by it it is interpreted through the energy of the grace of the Holy Spirit, which resides within the Church. In reality, all of these in the Church constitute one entirety, one living spiritual body, namely the written and the unwritten tradition. Therefore, as St. John Chrysostom says: "Tradition is to seek nothing more" (PG. 62, 488), because in it is formed everything which is necessary for the salvation of men and for their eternal life, in the present and in the future age. . .

In one word, the divine, the God-human tradition is the deliverance through the centuries and the generations of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, with all of His divine truths and commandments, His mysteries and virtues, as living God and Savior, in the Church and as the Church. And this exactly is the Church of Christ as His God-human body, namely the living, and the Holy Tradition extended throughout the centuries, the eternally living God-man Christ and everything He has in Himself and whatever He brings with Him. (2 Thes. 2: 15)



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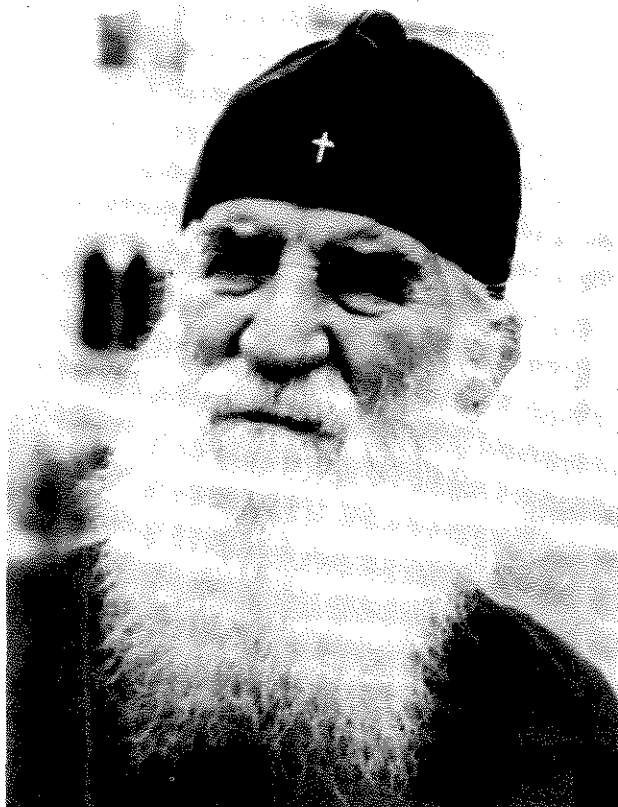
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INDEX

A

absolute, goodness, 71;
justice; 71; love; 71; truth, 71
Adam, 105; old, 159
Africa, 187
Africans, 193, 194
Amphilohios, Radovich,
Bishop, 12, 20
Angels, 184, 207
Anthony, St., 29
anthropocentricity, humanis-
tic, 101
anthropocentrism, 130
anthropology, 180
Antichrist, 25, 29
Antonios, Metropolitan, 222-
228
apostasy, 181
Apostles, Holy, 39, 42, 44, 47,
85, 86, 172, 175, 216, 218
apostolic, faith, 114; wisdom,
187
Arabia, Moslem, 189
Archangels, Holy, of Chelie,
Valyevo, 14
Aristotelian, philosophy, 91
Arius, 223
Aryanism, European, 223
Ascension, 75, 212
asceticism, of faith, 124; thean-
thropic, 167
ascetic(s), 29, 154, 161, 162;
Orthodox, 30; spirit, 30
asceticism, 30, 138, 139, 164
Asia, 187

Asiatics, 194

Athanasios, Yevitch, Bishop,
viii, 11, 20, 29

Atheism, 29, 184

atheistic, education, 56

avarice, 199

Avars, 193

awareness, of sin, 191

B

Babel, Tower of, 184

Balkan, lands, vii; peasant,
186

barbarism, pre-Christian, 193

Basil, the Great, St., 19, 29, 85,
100, 227

Basil, from Ostrog, St., 231

Berlin, 89

biology, 192

birth, spiritual, 159

bishops, 31, 177

Blagoye, 12

blasphemy, 24

body, spiritual mode, 144

Bolshevik, Revolution, 13

Bonaparte, Napoleon, 185,
186

Brahman, India, 189

Brothers Karamazov, 207

Buddha, 52

Buddhist, Tibet, 189

C

Caesar(s), 185; Roman, 194

Canon, 45th, 46th, 65th, of the

Holy Apostles, 175
 carnal, vision, 190; reasoning, 190; desires, 190; conquests, 190
 casuists, 169
 Catholic, Patristic Tradition, 175; Roman, 184
 Catholicism, Roman, 29
 Cavernos, Constantine, viii, 20
 century, 18th, 185-186, 191; 19th, 185-186, 188, 191; 20th, 185-186, 189, 191
 Chalcedon, 99
 characteristic, of natural knowledge, 141
 Chase, Frederic H., 176
 China, spiritualistic, 189
 Christ, 77, 218; faith of, 26; God-human, 22, 23; *see also* God-man; Gospel of, 219; Jesus, the Messiah, 183; Lord Jesus, 219; Savior, 218
 Christian, 27, 37; goal of a, 160; Life, 13; personality, 133; pre-, barbarism, 193; Orthodox, 86, 87, 113, 180; Western, 90
 Christianity, vii, 79, 89, 91-93, 95, 186-197; humanistic, 91, 92
 christification, 48
 Christocentric, 14
 Chrysostom, St., 15, 19, 85, 114, 198, 219, 221, 227, 232
 Church, vii, viii, 36, 37, 80-83, 94, 106, 114, 119, 173, 185, 213, 216, 217; ageless, 24; Catholic, Orthodox, 56; East
 ern Orthodox, vii; ecumenical, 24; Fathers, 15; God-human, 24; local, 25; God-human personhood, 24; indivisible, 24; mission of the, 23-25; Mystery of, 173; organism of the, 214; Orthodox, vii, 13-17, 19, 23, 37, 79, 83, 88, 95, 108, 114, 172; Orthodox Catholic, 170, 174; pseudo-, 170; Russian, 19; Serbian Orthodox, 11, 16, 20; True, 170
 civilization, 29; Greek Christian, vii; European, 102, 116, 192; Hellenic, 103; pagan, 188
 clergy, 181, 185
 commandment, Divine, 38; laws and, 137; of the Holy Gospel, 38
 Communion, Holy, 41, 173, 174; from heretics, 176
 compassion, 137
 conquests, carnal, 190
 conscience, human, 74, 204; pan-Orthodox, vii
 Constantine, the Great, 194
 contemplation, 153, 161, 162; heavenly, 160; immaterial, 154; mystical, 159; spiritual, 154; true, 159
 cosmos, 74
 Creation, 17
 criterion, highest, 77; ultimate, 98
 criticism, epistemological, 142; philosophical, 167
 Cross, 43, 45

cultism, 193
 culture, according to man, 102; Hellenic, 103
 Cyril, vii

D

Dachau, Germany, 63, 177
 Darwin, 58
 David, the prophet, 144, 196
 death, 22, 32-36, 45, 49, 75, 97, 198; slave to, 98
 deification, 48
 Demetrios, of Serbia, Patriarch, 13
 demonism, 198
 Demonization, White, 193, 194, 196
 demons, 183
 Descartes, 57
 desires, carnal, 190
 Despot, Stephan, St., 231
 Devil, 34, 36, 45, 49, 101, 103-105, 109, 114, 171, 185, 198-200, 210, 211, 213
 dialogue, of falsehood, 171; of love, 170, 172
 diplomacy, papal, 91
 disposition, human, 207
 divination, 205, 211
 divine, grace, 121; commandment, 38; -human 46; image, 209; life, 39, 43; love, 41, 43; peace, 130; perfection, 109; power, 39, 133; Revelation, 219; righteousness, 39, 41, 43; truth, 39, 43; Truth, 171, 202
 Djordjevic, Ir., 221

dogma, 45, 46, 201; concerning the infallibility, 102; heresy, 112; of idolatry, 103; Orthodox, 169
 Dogmatics, 202
 Dositheos, patriarch of Jerusalem, 89
 Dostoevsky, 18, 204, 207, 221, 229

E

Eastern Orthodox Church, vii, 24
 Ecumenical movement, vii
 Ecumenism, 19, 116, 169, 170
 Ecumenists, 172
 education, 51; atheistic, 56; European, 63; humanistic, 60; theanthropic, 63
 Efraim, St., 231
 egotism, 129
 England, 13
 enlightenment, 48, 56, 92; true, 64
 epistemological, systems, 168
 eternal, 55, 68; Joy, 98, 109; life, 35, 43, 67, 75, 79, 98, 109; Justice, 98, 218; Life, 171, 218; Love, 218; Truth, 41, 75, 98, 115; 171, 205
 eternity, 21-23, 114, 199-200
 Ethics, 46
 ethnicity, 193
 Eucharist, 172; Holy, 24, 172, 173
 Eugenia, St., 231
 Europe, 18, 56-58, 110, 115, 182, 186-191, 193-195, 229;

humanistic; Orthodox, 190;
 pagan, 194; pantheon, 110;
 Western, 169
 European(s), 29, 194; Aryan-
 ism, 223; civilization, 102,
 116, 192; education, 63; God,
 188; humanism, 92, 101, 102,
 110, 111, 116, 169; humanis-
 tic, 102, 112; humanity, 186,
 188; man, 57, 223, 230; infal-
 lible man, 112; philosophy,
 145; West, 89; Zeus, 110
 Evangelic, Truth, 104
 evanlegical, faith, 114; vir-
 tues, 55
 evil, 74, 97, 121-123; original,
 70; slave to, 98
 evolution, 193
 examination, 141
 existence, 67, 70
 experimentation, 141

F

faith, 34, 123, 148, 199; apos-
 tolic, 114; asceticism of, 124; of
 Christ, 26
 evanlegical, 114; faith, knowl-
 edge of, 143; Holy, 100;
 knowledge and, 143; Ortho-
 dox, 17, 18, 114, 209; two
 sorts of, 140
 falls, principal, 105
 falsehood, dialogue of, 171
 fasting, 26, 124, 125, 223
 Father(s), 29-30, 86-87, 89, 99,
 120, 172; Church, 15; Holy,
 29-30, 108, 113, 172, 175,
 207, 227
 fear, 125

fetishistic, 101
 Filioque, 169
 Florenski, P., 224
 Florovski, G., 223
 free, will, 133
 freedom, 132

G

Gadarenes, 193
 genius, 195
 Gentiles, 27
 Germany, 177
 glory, 183
 Glumac, D., 226
 gnoseology, 120
 God, Triune, 75
 God, Orthodox humanism of,
 101
 God, 34, 97, 200, 210, 218;
 European, 188; fear of, 125;
 Kingdom of, 157; laws and
 commandments of, 137; Lo-
 gos, 210, 211, 213, 214, 217;
 love of, 137; man, 98; mys-
 teries of, 135; Perfect, 98;
 pondering on, 125; remem-
 brance of, 124, 126; True, 98;
 God-human, ascetic, 26;
 Christ, 22, 23; Church, 24;
 cooperation, 212; institution,
 83; organism, 24, 83; syner-
 gy, 212; virtues, 24
 God-humanism, 113
 God-knowledge, 204
 God-man, (Christ), vii, 17, 36,
 53, 55, 64, 70, 72, 74, 75, 77,
 93, 94, 99, 100, 103, 106, 108,
 111, 113, 114, 119, 120, 165,
 169, 171, 173, 227; Hyposta-

sis of the, 107; personality,
 93; philosophy according to,
 99
 Goethe, 53
 Golgotha, 110
 good, 74, 79, 123; infinite, 70
 goodness, absolute, 71
 Gospel, 55, 192, 214, 219;
 according to man, 102; Ho-
 ly, 38, 42; of Christ, 219
 grace, 132, 133, 153; Divine,
 121; -filled wisdom, 134
 Greece, 12, 13, 57
 Greek, 12, 24; Christian civili-
 zation, vii
 Gregory, the Dialogue, St., 19,
 29
 guidelines, man, 64

H

Hadji-Arsic, St., 228, 232
 Haralambos, Boussias, viii
 hatred, 199
 healing, 139; of the organs,
 122
 health, of soul, 136
 Heavenly, Kingdom, 45
 hell, 130, 200, 210, 211
 Hellenic, humanism, 103;
 culture, 103; civilization, 103
 heresy(ies), 111, 112, 169;
 greatest, 111; Lutheran, 178;
 papal, 178; pan-, 169
 heretic(s), 174, 176
 heretical, misinterpretations,
 17
 Hilandar, Monastery, vii
 Holbachian, 61

holiness, 34, 56
 holy, Apostles, 39, 42, 44, 47,
 85-86, 172, 175; Archangels,
 of Chelie, Valyev, 14;
 Communion, 41, 174; Eu-
 charist, 24, 172, 173; Faith,
 100; Fathers, 29, 30, 108, 113,
 172, 175, 207, 227; Gospels,
 38, 42; Love, 100; Mountain,
 vii; Mysteries, 172; sacra-
 ments, 24; Scripture(s), 15,
 125, 157; Scripture myster-
 ies, 143; Spirit, 47, 56, 86-89,
 147, 152, 157, 169, 170, 203,
 218, 219; Synods, 172, 175;
 Tradition, 15, 18, 40, 108,
 173, 219; Trinity, 128, 132,
 157, 160, 161, 162, 171, 201,
 217
 Homiakov, A.S., 111, 223
 hominism, 105
 homo, (man), 101
 hope, 47
 Horologion, 19
 human, wisdom, 183
 human, conscience, 74, 204;
 disposition, 207; intellect,
 65; mind, 66; senses, 142;
 soul, 197; reflections, 207;
 sense, 207; thought, 208, 211
 humanism, 59, 91-92, 104-105,
 108, 110-114, 222, 232; Euro-
 pean, 92, 101-102, 110-111,
 116, 169; Hellenic, 103; pa-
 pal, 112; satanic, 110
 humanistic, anthropocentric-
 ity, 101; Christianity, 91, 92;
 education, 60; European,

112; idolatry, 56; pacifism, 172; pantheon of Europe, 110; papacy, 104
 humanity, 69; European, 186; Western, 179, 181, 188
 Hume, 57
 humility, 27, 28, 47, 114, 130-132, 152, 162; true, 158
 Huns, 193
 Hypostasis, 77, 80; of the God-man, 107

I

idealism, 145; philosophical, 168
 idolatry, 103, 110; humanistic, 56; of Rome, 179
 illumination, 56
 image, divine, 209
 immortal 22, 55, 67-68; life, 75, 166
 immortality, 19, 22-24, 34, 35, 63, 67, 68, 72, 75, 198-200, 203, 207, 211
 impurity, 135
 incarnation, 83
 India, Brahman, 189
 indulgence, 169
 inertia, 21
 infallibility, 89, 90, 92, 102, 104, 169; of the European Man, 230; papal (of the pope), 104, 109, 111-112, 184
 infinite, 68; good, 70; justice, 70; life, 70; truth, 70
 inner, sense, 146
 inquisition, 91, 169
 institution, God-human, 83
 intellect, 125, 127, 128, 135,

137-139, 155, 167; human, 65; man as, 58; purification of the, 134; purity of, 136
 intercommunion, 170, 173
 internationalism, 193
 Isaac the Syrian, Saint, 12, 13, 15, 18, 117, 120, 129, 130-131, 135, 138, 142, 140, 146, 147, 149-153, 151-157, 160-161, 163-164, 166-167, 223;
 The Theory of Knowledge of, 225, 229
 Isaiah, 144

J

Jagodic, 226
 Jeremiah, prophet, 61, 92
 Jerusalem, 157
 Jesuitism, 57, 169
 Jesus, Lord, 216; *see also* Christ
 Jew(s), 24, 181
 John, of Damascus, St., 15, 93, 106, 114, 175, 176, 203
 John, of Krostant, Saint, 209
 Joy, eternal, 98, 109
 Judas, 105
 Judgment, Last, 222
 justice, 79; absolute, 71; eternal, 98, 218; infinite, 70
 justification, 200
 Justin, Popovich, vii, viii, 11, 12, 186, 197, 203; genuine love of, 14

K

kaiser, 186; Western, 187
 Kant, 52, 55, 57, 60
 Karlovtsi Prizren, 13

Karmiris, Ioannis, 14, 89
 kingdom, of heaven, 45, 160, 198
 Kingdom, of God, 157
 knowledge, 67, 70, 145, 146, 148, 152, 182, 164, 166, 206; and faith, 147; characteristic of, 141; God-, 204; mystery of, 139, 147, 150; natural, 142, 140; nature of, 149; nature and character of, 152; of faith, 143; of Truth, 166, 205; organs of human, 139, 164, 167; philosophy of, 206; self-, 158, 204; spiritual, 144; theory of, 120; true, 144, 158
 Koran, 187
 Kostic, Vasilije, Dr., 227
 Kremlin, 186

L

Last Judgment, 222
 Latin, 169
 laws, and commandments, 137; natural, 142
 laziness, 137
 Legion, 169
 Leibnitz, 51
 life, 34, 67, 77, 87, 97, 114, 198; Divine, 39; eternal, 21, 67, 75, 79, 98, 109, 171, 218; infinite, 70; immortal, 75, 166; true, 33
 light, 79
 liturgical, life, 31
Lives of the Saints, 19, 39, 41, 42, 44, 45, 47

Locke, 57
 Logos, 36, 72, 76, 78, 82, 94, 206; God, 206, 210, 211, 213, 214, 217
logosni (divine-rational), 76
logosnost, (rationality), 78; (reasonableness), 76
 Lombards, 193
 love, 27, 47, 128, 162, 193, 205, 213; absolute, 71; dialogue of, 170, 172; Divine, 41, 43; eternal, 98, 218; Holy, 100; of God, 137; perfect, 129; of sin, 134; philosophy of, 206; true, 33
 Lucifer, 114
 Luther, 90, 182, 184
 Lutheran, 184
 Lutheran, heresies, 178
 Lutheranism, 90, 183

M

Macarios, of Egypt (the Egyptian), Saint, 13, 15, 18, 223
 magnanimous, 28
 Majstorovic, M., 229
 malice, 199
 man, 97, 101, 106, 210, 211; culture according to, 102; de-theanthropization of, 110; as intellect, 58; European, 57, 61, 223; European infallible, 112; gospel according to, 102; guidelines, 64; (*homo*), 101; nature of, 57; Perfect, 98; philosophy according to, 102; philosophy

of, 207; problem of, 97; -robot, 61, 62; True, 98; Western, 17; *see also* God-man
 Maria (Rule), Mother, viii, 168
 Marinkovic, Z., 225
 Mark, the Ascetic, St., 39
 martyrdom, 28
 Martyrs, 86
 Mastrogiannopoulos, Elias, 232
 material, realities, 66
 maximalism, papal, 90
 Maximos, the Confessor, St., 172
 medicine, 112
 meekness, 27, 28, 47, 162
 Meletios, of Hilandar, Bishop, 230
 Mephistopheles, 53
 mercy, 162
 Messiah, 52
 Messiah, the, Jesus Christ, 183
 Methodios, vii
 Metropolitan, Antonios, 226-228
 mind, 124, 136; human, 66; peace of, 152
 minimalism, Protestant, 90
 minimalistic, pacifism, 172
 Mohammed, 52
 Monarchianism, 169
 Monastir, 13
 monism, 142; theanthropic, 165
 monks, 31
 moralistic, pacifism, 172
 morality, 46

morality, 78; Orthodox, 46
 Moses, 52, 144
 Moslem, Arabia, 189
 moujik, Russian, 186
 Muskegon, Community, viii
 Mystery(ies), 149, 173, 174, 219; Holy, 172; of the Church, 173; of God, 135; of the Holy Scriptures, 125, 143; of the Holy Trinity, 128; of knowledge, 139, 147, 150; of Truth, 203

N

Napoleon, Bonaparte, 185
 nationalism, 25
 Nectarios, The Wonderworker, St., 233
 New Testament, 19, 38, 80, 93, 202, 206, 213, 222
 Nicephoros, Theotokis, 117
 Nicholas, of Achrida, 177
 Nietzschean, assertion, 103
 Nietzsche, 53, 58, 59, 60, 185, 186
 nihilism, 110
 Nikolaj, Bishop, 221
 Nirvana, 52
 Nusic, B., 222, 228

O

Oecumenical, Synod(s), 87, 88, 89, 99, 113, 230
 Old Testament, 217
 optimism, 221, 222
 organism, God-human, 83; of the Church, 214
 organs, healing of the, 122; of human knowledge, 139; of

understanding, 120-122, 135; sick, 122
 Orthodox, 86, 172, 176, 178; ascetics, 30; Catholic Church, 56, 170; Christians, 86-87, 113, 180; Church, vii, 13-17, 19, 23, 79, 83, 88, 95, 108, 114, 172, 174; Church, Serbian, 11, 16, 20; dogma, 169; Eastern Church, vii; Encyclopedia, 47; ethics, 46; Europe, 190; faith, 17, 18, 114, 209; gnoseiology, 205; humanism of God, 101; peasant, 186; philosophy, 168, 201, 203; Theology, 173; Tradition, 174
 Orthodoxy, 21, 29, 30, 65, 81, 84, 227

P

pacifism, humanistic, 172; minimalistic, 172; moralistic, 172
 pagan, civilization, 188; Europe, 194
 Paladios, Bishop of Helenopolis, 224
 Palierne, Jean-Louis, 12
 pan-Orthodox, authority, vii; conscience, vii
 pantheism, 118
 papacy, 89, 90, 101, 104, 111, 112; humanistic, 104
 papal, 101; diplomacy, 91; haughtiness, 170; heresies, 178; humanism, 112; infallibility, 109, 111, 112; maxi-

malism, 90; state, 91
 papism, 90, 169, 170, 183,
 Papocaesarism, 169
 Paradise, 43, 130, 187, 200, 207, 210
 Parakletike, 113
 Parenta, M., 221
 passion(s), 49, 121, 122, 126-128, 151, 158
 patience, 28
 patristic, catholic Tradition, 175; Orthodox Tradition, vii; theology, genuine, 16
 Paul, Apostle, 19, 84, 99, 104, 144, 213
 peace, divine, 130
 peasant, Balkan, 186; Orthodox, 186
 pedagogical science, 47
 Pentecost, 86
 Pentekostarion, 19
 Perfect, God, 98; health, 152; love, 129; Man, 98
 perfection, 70, 72; Divine, 109
 personality, Christian, 133; God-man's, 93
 pessimism, 221, 222
 Peter, Apostle, 39, 115, 144
 Peter, from Cetinje, St., 232
 Petersburg, Russia, St., 13
 philosopher, 185-187
 philosophical, criticism, 167; idealism, 168
 philosophical, rationalism, 202; system, 117, 118
 philosophy, according to man, 99, 102; according to God-man, 99; Aristotelian,

- 91; Christian Orthodox, 166; European, 117, 145; materialist, 158; modern, 142; of the Holy Spirit, 203; of knowledge, 206; of love, 206; of man, 207; Orthodox, 168; phenomenalist, 118, 158; profane, 157; realist, 158; relativist, 118
- piety, 34
- Pilate, 77, 186
- Pius, 185, 186
- Plato, 52
- pleasure, 182, 183
- podvig(s)*, 36, 40, 44, 48, 106
- polytheism, 110
- polytheistic, religion, 92
- pondering, on God, 125
- pontifex, 186
- Pontiff, Roman, 185
- Pope, 56, 89, 106, 169, 182, 184-187, 191; infallibility of the, 104, 109, 184; of Rome, 183
- Popovich, Justin, *see* Justin Popovich
- positivism, 92
- power, 182, 183; Divine, 39, 133
- prayer, 26, 31, 48, 127-129, 131, 135, 136, 162; unceasing, 153; pure, 155
- pride, 114, 199
- priests, 31
- primacy, 169
- problem, of man, 97
- prophet, Jeremiah, 61
- Protestant(s), 170; minimalism, 90; wisdom, 184
- Protestantism, 30, 89, 90, 111, 169, 170
- Ptchynyskii, Prochoros, Saint, 13
- purification, 28, 139; of the intellect, 134
- purity, 72; of heart, 137, 138; of intellect, 136, 138
- R**
- rationalism, 117, 167
- rationalism, philosophical, 202
- realism, theanthropic, 167
- realism, 117, 142, 145
- realities, material, 66; spiritual, 66
- reasoning, carnal, 190
- reflections, human, 207
- religion, polytheistic, 92
- remembrance, of God, 124, 126
- Renaissance, 57, 61; post-, 102; pre-, 102
- repentance, 87, 112, 198-200
- Resurrection, 19, 35, 36, 75, 211, 222
- Revelation, divine, 219
- righteousness, 47; Divine, 39, 41, 43; works of, 143
- Roman, Caesars, 194; Catholic, 184; Pontiff, 185
- Rome, 89, 91, 179, 183
- Rousseau, 57, 59, 60
- Russian, Church, 19; moujik, 186
- S**
- Sacrament, of Sacraments, 172

- sacrifice, 30
- saints, the, 41, 47, 56, 64, 184
- salvation, 48, 49, 169, 198, 211, 212; Divine-human, 46
- sanctification, 48, 211, 212
- Sartre, 110
- Satan, 105, 197-200, 207, 210
- satanic, humanism 110
- Satanism, 198
- Savior, 52, 107; Christ, 218; Only, 103
- Savva, St., 19, 229, 231; and St. Symeon, 204; Bankovic, 230
- scepticism, 118
- scholars, European, 195
- scholastic(s), 169; theological system, 17
- scholasticism, 91, 170
- Schopenhauer, 58, 60
- Scripture, Holy, 157
- self-denial, 30
- sense(s), 124; human, 142, 207; inner, 146
- sensualism, 66, 118, 167
- Seraphim, St., 29
- Serbia, 12
- Serbian(s), vii, viii, 20; Orthodox Church, 11, 16, 20; Philosophical Society, 14
- Sergios, St., 29
- Shakespeare, 52
- Simeon, St., 163
- sin(s), 103, 109, 126, 197-199, 210, 212; awareness of, 191; sloth and love of, 134
- Sioras, George, of Brookline, viii
- Sisyphian, torment, 215
- Skedros, James, viii
- Skiris, S., 232
- slave, 229; to death, 98; to evil, 98
- Slavic, World, 18
- Slijepcevic, Dj., 225
- sloth, 134
- soul, 68, 69, 83, 87, 94, 121-124, 126, 129, 130, 153, 157, 160; health of, 136; human, 197; spiritual mode, 144; states of, 158
- Septsieris, Joachim, 117
- Spirit, Holy, 47, 56, 87-89, 147, 157, 169, 170, 203, 218, 219; spiritual mode, 144
- spiritual, birth, 159; realities, 66; three modes, 143; world, 159
- spiritualistic, China, 189
- state, of progress, 193; papal, 91
- stichera*, 113
- Stoyanovich, Milan, viii
- Stretenovic, M., 229
- Styerner, 58
- superhuman, 58, 59
- supernatural, 158
- supreme, value, 98
- svezivot*, 78
- Symeon, the New Theologian, St., vii, 15, 19, 108, 114, 229, 231; St. Savva and, 204
- Synod(s), Great, 19; Holy, 172, 175; Oecumenical, 87-

89, 99, 111, 113, 230; of Lao-dicea, 175
system, philosophical, 117, 118

T

tears, 138
temptations, 134
Testament, New, 19, 38, 80, 93, 202, 206, 213, 222; Old, 217
theanthropic, ascesis, 167; education, 63, 64; monism, 165; realism, 167
theanthropization, de-, 110
Theodore, of Studion, 176
Theohumanism, 101
Theology, Orthodox, 173
Theory of Knowledge of St. Isaac, The, 225, 229
theosis, 100
Theotokis, Nicephoros, 117
Theotokos, Most Holy, 44, 45, 184
thought(s), 127; human, 207, 211
Tibet, Buddhist, 189
time, 22, 114
Tolstoy, 53
Tower, of Babel, 184
Tradition, 18, 218; holy, 40; 108, 173, 219; of the Orthodox Church, 18; Orthodox, 174
trans-oceanism, 193
transcendental, gods, 22
transfiguration, 48
Trinity, Holy, 32, 57, 128, 160-162, 171, 201, 217; mysteries

of the, 128
Triodion, 19
Triune, God, 75
true, enlightenment, 64; God, 98
truth, 47, 74, 77, 79, 107, 150, 170; absolute, 71, 119; Divine, 39, 43, 171, 202; eternal, 75, 98, 115, 171, 205, 218; eternal Divine, 41; Evangelic, 105, infinite, 70; knowledge of, 205; mystery of, 203
Tychon, Patriarch, 223
Tzar, Lazar, St., 231

U

ultimate, criterion, 98
unbelief, 34
understanding, organs of, 120, 121, 135; sick organs, 122

V

value(s), 55; supreme, 98
Vatican, 57, 110-111; First Council, 102; Second Council, 102, 109, 115
Velimirovich, Nicholas, Bishop, 13
Veselinovic, Stevan, 222
Vicarius Christi, 91, 104, 110
victory, 108
vigilance, 125, 135, 223
virtue(s), 97, 122, 123, 126, 136, 137, 151, 158, 163, 166, 201, 219; evangelical, 55; virtues, Holy, 24; God-human, 24

vision, carnal, 190
volitionists, 58
Vranje, Serbia, 12

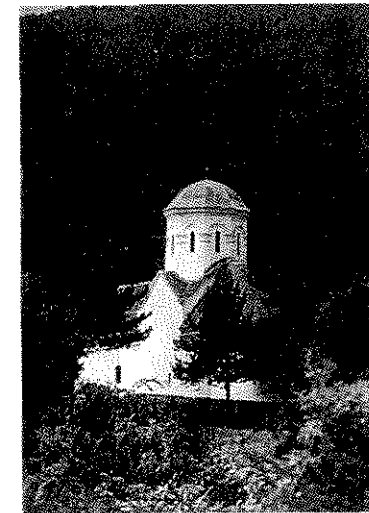
W

War, Second World, 177
Western, Christian, 90; man, 17; humanity, 179, 181, 188; kaiser, 187
wickedness, 199
wisdom, 79; apostolic, 187;

grace-filled, 134; human, 183; Protestant, 184
world, vii, 121; spiritual, 169

Z

Zander, L. 221
Zarathustra, 58, 59
Zeus, European
Zint, A., 63
Zitsa, 177
zoology, 192



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